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NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

NOTICE TO READERS: The United States Government recognizes the independence of the republics of the former Soviet Union.

NOTICE TO READERS: The name of this book will change from the "Soviet Union DAILY REPORT" to the "Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT" with the 6 January 1992 edition. The "Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT" will cover the same geographic area as the "Soviet Union DAILY REPORT."

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United States & Canada

Gorbachev Bids 'Farewell' to Bush, Kohl

OW2512231591 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] An hour and a half before he announced his resignation, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev had a telephone conversation with US President George Bush. Mr. Gorbachev called on his American colleague to pursue a policy of support for the independent states which have established the Commonwealth. "This is extremely important both for Europe and the whole world", he said.

Mr. Gorbachev emphasized that the Commonwealth of Independent States should be given support if the processes of disintegration are to be checked.

The conversation also touched upon the situation in Russia Mikhail Gorbachev stressed that Russia is going to shoulder the main burden of responsibility for the future of the reform effort and urged the US President to do everything in his power to help Russia during what he said would be a "difficult" winter.

With respect to the issue of nuclear weapons, Mr. Gorbachev was emphatic that he thought this problem had been addressed in depth in Alma-Ata and he was hopeful that it would be given the same substantial and conscientious treatment in Minsk. "This means, Esteemed President, that you will be able to have an untroubled Christmas even," he said.

President Gorbachev said that he is not going to "depart for the Taiga", as he put it, after he leaves office "I am going to take an active part in public life", he said. "The roles we have may change, but the good things that have emerged between us will remain. The Soviet-American relations that have been forged are an asset that must be preserved and increased".

Mr. Bush said that he would continue taking part in implementing the programs of assistance for Russia in view of the special objectives confronting it and the problems which may come to a head this winter.

Mr. Gorbachev also had a telephone conversation with Germany's Foreign Minister Dietrich Genscher in which he said he had been ready to announce his resignation the day before but had deliberately procrastinated to enable his foreign colleagues to think over all the developments thoroughly. Mr. Gorbachev expressed hope that ties between Germany and the republics of the Commonwealth would continue to expand.

Herr Genscher cordially thanked Mr. Gorbachev for everything that he had done for the triumph of the new mentality the world over, and stressed the especially important role that Mr. Gorbachev had played with respect to Germans.

Gorbachev on 'Nuclear Button'

LD2512165391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1547 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Lyudmila Aleksandrova and Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—Mikhail Gorbachev reported today to U.S. President George Bush that he is handing over the "nuclear button" to Boris Yeltsin.

In a telephone conversation which took place at about 1700 Moscow time [1500 GMT], Mikhail Gorbachev reported to the U.S. President that he has prepared a decree on giving up the duties of supreme commander and is giving the right to use nuclear weapons to the Russian president.

"As soon as I announce my resignation I will immediately put this decree into effect", said the USSR president to George Bush, adding that he "will be able to have a peaceful Christmas evening".

Mikhail Gorbachev conveyed Christmas greetings to George Bush and asked for greetings to be passed on to his wife and family. The USSR president said he had a very high regard for what he and the U.S. President had done together.

Mikhail Gorbachev said that he would be deploying all his political prestige to ensure that the Commonwealth of Independent States is an effective one. The USSR president is satisfied that a very important agreement on strategic nuclear weapons was reached in Alma-Ata.

Mikhail Gorbachev told George Bush that it is necessary to pursue the path of recognizing the independence of the Commonwealth states. For the first time journalists were present during the two presidents' telephone call, which Mikhail Gorbachev made from his Kremlin office.

TASS Cites Bush on Gorbachev's Resignation

LD2512225791 Moscow TASS in English 2209 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrey Fediyashin]

[Text] Washington December 25 TASS—President of the United States George Bush expressed his gratitude to Mikhail Gorbachev speaking on the telephone on Wednesday [25 December]. Marlin Fitzwater, press secretary of the U.S. President said that "Bush emphasised the former Soviet president's role in historical transformation of the Soviet Union and his personal courage, while leading democratic reforms."

According to sources in the administration, the recognition of the republics will be announced on Thursday [26 December]. On Tuesday [24 December] George Bush will address the nation on television with two reports, dedicated one—to Gorbachev's resignation, another—to recognition of the new Commonwealth. Bush noticed [as received] that the decision was prompted by his respect to the former Soviet president.

However the American side clearly hinted that it would not recognize the Commonwealth itself as it is not consistent with principles of statehood.

The White House supports Russia entering the U.N. Security Council.

George Bush interrupted his country side vacation in Camp David on Wednesday and came back to Washington—to address the nation at 2100 local time (0400 in Moscow) on the television. He will dedicate the whole report to the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

Article Reviews Handover of Bugging Plans

PM2312130191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Dec 91 Union Edition p 7

[V. Belykh article: "Once Again About U.S. Embassy Bugs. New Twist to Sensational Story of Handover of Secret Documents to U.S. Ambassador"]

[Text] The handover of plans showing where bugs were placed in the new U.S. Embassy building in Moscow to U.S. diplomats by the heir to the USSR KGB—the ISS [Interrepublic Security Service]—has unexpectedly turned into quite a mighty scandal.

For example, the fray has been joined by the previously unknown Public Committee to Ensure State Security created deep within the ISS by its own staffers. Today the committee members are everywhere disseminating an appeal which opens with a simple and touching form of address:

"Chekists! Comrades! Colleagues!"

The memorandum goes on to expound a new version of what happened. According to this, Vadim Bakatin personally turned up at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and presented a perplexed Mr. Strauss with a plan of the bugs in the new embassy complex. And, to make it all more convincing, he appended to it "models of the latest devices for obtaining information from the premises." In so doing, in the opinion of the mysterious Public Committee to Ensure State Security, he betrayed his own intelligence service. "In this shameless way an end has been put to one of the most complex operational-technical measures of the state security organs, which required colossal work on the part of many of our best KGB scientists, specialists, and operatives and the expenditure of a large amount of material and financial resources," the appeal bitterly sums up. The Public Committee to Ensure State Security is particularly indignant that the "gift" to the Americans was made right on the eve of the Soviet chekists' professional holiday.

At the end, in addition to the traditional calls for vigilance, the public committee proposes a number of stern and concrete measures for those who "divulged" the secret of the bugging of the empty U.S. Embassy buildings: an open parliamentary hearing, the institution of criminal proceedings on a charge of breaking the military oath and of treason, the gathering of operational information on the guilty persons for forwarding to a court and to the press....

While the Public Committee to Ensure State Security is circulating formidable appeals, IZVESTIYA has been informed of the official version of what happened by ISS Deputy Chairman Anatoliy Oleynikov. According to him, the Americans "caught" our chekists during the construction of their new embassy in Moscow as early as 1982. They employed tomography on the walls and refused categorically to move into such buildings. At the same time they also halted the construction of our new embassy in Washington. After that, the bugging system, whose existence we denied to the whole world with dignity, was abandoned and never completed. But why? All the same, the Americans avoided this place, and for almost 10 years the top-secret apparatus could have recorded, if it had nonetheless been switched on, only the squeaking of rats and the cooing of pigeons... It was under these conditions, in the end, that a good idea was born—for the sake of goodneighbor relations to hand over to the U.S. Embassy the ill-starred plan of the layout of the lines and bugging elements in its new building.

From "the models of the latest devices for obtaining information from the premises" the fortunate Americans will, as a result, get their hands on several kilometers of cable, two microphones, the electronic unit, and the power unit. It is all the last word in mid-seventies technology from what they had time to build into the walls and then abandoned after the failure. However, according to Anatoliy Oleynikov, the "enemy" already knew pretty well what lay where, having drawn up his own plan—no worse than ours—with the help of clever instruments. The ISS has also uncovered the total losses we incurred in this inglorious operation—just under 1 million rubles at the prices during those years.

Oleynikov said that the possibility of handing over the documentation relating to the U.S. Embassy had been discussed back in September. Yeltsin, Gorbachev, the Union and Russian Foreign Ministries were in the know. This question was also raised by Baker during his last visit to our country. U.S. Ambassador Strauss received the ill-starred plans through his representative Collins, who had been handed them by staffers of Bakatin's apparatus.

But why did they decide to hand over the bugging documents at all?

In the opinion of the ISS deputy chairman, the reasons were quite weighty. For not so long ago we too discovered unknown microphones and amplifiers in the walls of our embassy buildings in Washington. Therefore the security service hopes that its U.S. colleagues will "behave in a gentlemanly manner" and give us their

Washington secrets. And then, so the ISS believes, U.S. Embassy staffers will at last move into the new building, thus restoring $300 million to their country. And our diplomats in Washington will be able to hold their long-awaited housewarming...

Many employees of the ISS itself believe that this step has put us in a difficult position in respect of other countries. Their diplomats have perceived the news of the gift by our security service with keen interest: They are not naive people and cannot think that the KGB was interested only in what was happening within the walls of the U.S. Embassy alone, while others did not concern it. It is possible that their questions will also have to be answered now. However, we can always return to the old footing and claim that we intended to spy only on the Americans and only in their new building.

At the end of the conversation Anatoliy Oleynikov complained that the leaders preferred to adopt the notorious political decision to hand over another secret rather than a law on the exchange of information with the special services of other countries, which would have made it possible to avoid ambiguity in such situations...

'No Grounds' for Charges on Bakatin

LD2412215991 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 2000 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "New Wave" program]

[Text] Major General Anatoliy Oleynikov, a leader of the interrepublican security service, stated that there are no grounds for initiating criminal proceedings against Vadim Bakatin in connection with his recent handover to the United States of information on listening devices at the U.S. Embasssy being built in Moscow. Oleynikov noted that a political decision had been taken on the handover of the information; it was aimed at solving the problem of building embassies in the two countries, in Moscow and Washington, specifically.

China

Envoy Says 'No' PRC 'Territorial Disputes'

LD2512175391 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1200 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Not long ago the mass media once again raised the issue of territorial claims—on this occasion it was about claims by Mongolia and China to territories of the countries in Asia. As is known, with China alone, our border runs for nearly 7,000 km. No doubt, equally lengthy were the talks about its demarcation:

[G. Kireyev, ambassador at large] The talks started in 1964. A great deal was done to cover the eastern part of the border and essentially a great deal was agreed, although the political realities of those days made it impossible for an agreement to be signed.

[Correspondent V. Kulikov] Couldn't you say outright whether or not there exist territorial disputes or territorial claims between our country and the PRC today?

[Kireyev] I can give a straightforward answer to that question. We have no territorial disputes. There is no question of our having any claims against each other. They were removed at the very beginning of the 1987 talks. As I have already said, it is now a question of fixing more precisely where the line of the border runs and of defining that line.

[Kulikov] Today China has borders with four soverign states: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. How is this taken into account in the negotiations?

[Kireyev] Even before the 1987 talks began, you know, we carried out serious consultations with representatives of the Union republics, those four you have just mentioned in terms of being states, and it has to be said that their representatives take part both in the work of the government delegation and in the working group.

Northeast Asia

'Expert' Cited on DPRK's Nuclear Program

PM2412125591 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 24 Dec 91 p 3

[Interview with Valeriy Yermolov, "expert on Korean problem," by A. Platkovskiy; date and place not given: "Revolutionary Ecstasy: No Pants, But Bomb. Pyongyang's Nuclear Program Reaches Critically Dangerous Point, Valeriy Yermolov, Expert on Korean Problem, Reckons"]

[Text] [Platkovskiy] A DPRK-ROK agreement was recently signed in Seoul on reconciliation, nonaggression, cooperation, and exchanges. Does this herald an end to the "cold war" on the Korean peninsula?

[Yermolov] Needless to say, it is still too early to speak of an end to the protracted military-political confrontation and mutual alienation between the DPRK and the ROK. Both sides have taken the first step toward reconciliation. And in order for this to occur they had to sidestep many contentious elements. The resolution of these elements has been postponed till the future. That is why it came as a surprise to most observers that the agreement was concluded so rapidly—back in October, at the previous meeting of the DPRK and ROK prime ministers, the sides' positions were extremely far-removed from one another. It is worth noting that the North, whose position has always been notable for its rigidity and lack of compromise, made particularly marked concessions. It is thought that outside pressure, above all from China, was put on Pyongyang.

It is also hard to predict how the talks will go between Pyongyang and Seoul on the question of ridding the Korean peninsula of nuclear weapons. Now, when President No Tae-u has said that there is not a single unit of nuclear weapons on ROK territory, everything is being held up by the DPRK's refusal to allow International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] inspections of its nuclear installations. Pyongyang must not only say that it is not developing nuclear arms but also prove this to the world community.

[Platkovskiy] Why did Pyongyang need nuclear weapons? Does it really want to "conquer" South Korea with these weapons?

[Yermolov] Presumably North Korea needs nuclear weapons as a guarantee of its autonomy, based on the "chuche" policy. Particularly now, given the radical changes taking place in the world and the DPRK's increasing isolation since Moscow established diplomatic relations with South Korea. In Pyongyang's viewpoint, nuclear weapons constitute a weighty argument in its dialogue with Seoul. In addition—and this is possibly the main element—possession of nuclear weapons, the North Korean leadership reckons, will impel the United States to establish direct contacts with the DPRK and speed up the normalization of relations with Japan.

[Platkovskiy] It is claimed that Moscow facilitated Pyongyang's uncontrolled nuclear program?

[Yermolov] North Korea embarked on nuclear studies in the sixties. It was then that North Korean nuclear scientists started going to the Soviet Union for a tour of duty at Dubna [Soviet nuclear research institute] and a small nuclear reactor, used solely for scientific purposes, was built outside Pyongyang, near the town of Yongbyon. This reactor, I must note, was immediately put under IAEA control. The fact that Pyongyang had its own plans which it kept secret from Moscow is another matter.

During the eighties the North Koreans built a second nuclear reactor on their own in the same place, in Yongbyon, as well as an installation producing fuel for this reactor. As far as I know, construction of the production capacities needed to produce fissionable materials used both for peaceful purposes and for developing a nuclear bomb will be completed within the next few months. These installations have so far not been put under IAEA control.

[Platkovskiy] You get the impression that Moscow is reacting extremely sluggishly to its former ally's dangerous game...

[Yermolov] As a depositary of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Soviet Union acted and acts on the premise that the signing and unconditional enacting of the agreement on guarantees with the IAEA is the DPRK's direct commitment under this treaty and therefore must be carried out unconditionally. Moscow is putting pressure on Pyongyang in this area within the IAEA and also through surviving diplomatic channels. I must admit that full use has not hitherto been made of such of Moscow's levers for pressure as economic and continuing military cooperation with Pyongyang, aid in the construction of a nuclear electric power station and the training of specialists in the sphere of nuclear technology, and the mechanism of the Soviet-DPRK treaty.

[Platkovskiy] You mentioned the Soviet-DPRK treaty. Are our relations still based on that rudimentary document?

[Yermolov] Neither side has as yet denounced the 1961 Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. Nevertheless its fate is predetermined and there is only a short while to wait for its demise, in my view. However, it is important during this transitional period, when a new commonwealth of states is emerging in the place of the former USSR, not to allow the inevitable revision of this treaty to become a wholesale rupturing of ties with the DPRK. Such a turn of events would indeed herald the disruption of strategic stability and security on the Korean peninsula and in the region as a whole. No sensible politician, be he in Moscow, Seoul, Washington, or any other capital, is interested in that.

Near East & South Asia

TRUD Interviews Six POWs in Afghanistan

LD2512093491 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0300 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] A Soviet journalist—Vladimir (Snegirov), TRUD's political observer—for the first time has made an illegal hike around Afghan territory to seek Soviet POWs. Ruslan Aushev, chairman of the USSR presidential Committee for Internationalist Soldiers, reports that (Snegirov), together with two English journalists, met with one of the heads of the Afghan armed opposition and with six Soviet POWs. Sergey (Fadeyev), Leonid (Vylku), Viktor (Nazarov), Nikolay (Bystrov), Gennadiy (Tsema), and Aleksandr (Levinets) were filmed on video and shown to a news conference for journalists and for the parents of those who have gone missing. Soviet POWs are not in danger; they feel alright, Aushev said. He said the mujahidin have confirmed their willingness to start talks with Soviet official representatives on handing over Soviet citizens but only after 1 January 1992, when deliveries of Soviet military hardware to Afghanistan cease.

[Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian at 0230 GMT on 25 December adds in a similar report: "There are 305 people on the missing persons list, with information existing on only about 80 POWs."]

Rebels To Release 3 POWs

LD2612121791 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Rabbani, one of the leaders of the Afghan opposition, today announced the release of three Soviet prisoners of war. He told journalists in Islamabad that all three were from Uzbekistan. The mujahidin intend to hand them over to representatives of the joint commission being set up by the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Afghan opposition. At the same time Rabbani noted that the mujahidin are counting on the release of their own people from Kabul jails in exchange for the three Soviet prisoners of war.

Israel Recognizes Commonwealth States

LD2612103191 Moscow TASS in English 0915 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Tel Aviv December 26 (TASS)—Israel decided late on Wednesday [25 December] to recognise all members of the new Commonwealth of Independent States and to establish diplomatic relations with them.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy told the national parliament his country will develop relations with all the Commonwealth states and hopes the existing ties will increase. Israel is sure the Commonwealth members will observe the rights of Jews and guarantee their free exit to Israel, Levy added.

West Europe

Gorbachev Receives Italian Ambassador 24 Dec

LD2412204291 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1630 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev this evening in the Kremlin received Italian Ambassador Ferdinand Salleo. The ambassador handed Gorbachev a personal message from Italian President Francesco Cossiga as well as a personal letter and Christmas souvenirs from Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti.

[Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian at 2100 GMT on 24 December adds the following: "After resigning, Mikhail Gorbachev will become head of an international fund for social, economic, and political research. This is what he told the Italian ambassador to the USSR today. Gorbachev stressed that he does not intend to be in opposition to the Russian leadership."]

Kohl Praises Gorbachev for Changing World

LD2612085291 Moscow TASS in English 2237 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Semenov]

[Text] Bonn December 26 (TASS)— Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation reflects the dramatic changes in the former Soviet Union, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said on Wednesday [25 December].

Gorbachev has boosted the process of revolutionary changes in the Soviet Union and renovated its foreign policy. He has taken the country out of the 70-year-long stagnation and oppression and facilitated the free development of central, eastern and southern Europe.

The settlement of the conflict between the east and west, unprecedented successes in disarmament and arms control would be impossible without Gorbachev, Kohl said.

He also praised Gorbachev's policy turning the unification of Germany into reality.

Foreign Minister Calls Gorbachev

LD2512203391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1801 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS special correspondents Ludmila Aleksandrova and Ivan Ivanov from the Kremlin]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—Mikhail Gorbachev had a conversation with the deputy federal chancellor, FRG Foreign Affairs Minister Hans-Dietrich Gensher, today at about 1800 Moscow time after having a telephone conversation with the U.S. President.

TASS has learned that Genscher extended his gratitude to Mikhail Gorbachev for all that has been done by the USSR president during the years of perestroyka. "You have done a great many things both for your own country and for us. You have won the hearts of the Germans and this will stay forever in the memory of our people," he said.

Mikhail Gorbachev thanked H-D. Genscher for highly assessing his work which had been carried out in the post of the USSR president.

H-D. Genscher reiterated his invitation to Mikhail Gorbachev to visit Germany in his new capacity in order to continue political contacts, for holiday or for public speeches.

Von Weizsaecker Thanks Gorbachev

LD2512060991 Moscow TASS in English 1513 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Viktor Chistyakov]

[Text] Bonn December 23 TASS—German President Richard von Weizsaecker has thanked USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev on behalf of the entire German nation for the influence he had exerted on the process of reforms in Europe and on East-West relations, as well as for his disarmament effort. The gratitude was expressed in a New Year's address to Mikhail Gorbachev, released here today.

"We, Germans, thank you for the fact that our country's state unity was restored in conditions of freedom and peace," Richard von Weizsaecker writes. "The reforms you started have opened up prospects for fruitful cooperation to all the Europeans."

The address says that the disarmament initiatives, which have made the world safer, are also largely linked with Gorbachev's name.

Richard von Weizsaecker highly praised the vitality and boldness of Gorbachev's conceptions, as well as the historical dimension of his ideas. The address expresses the hope that both politicians will be able to continue exchanging views in the future, too.

Mitterrand Lauds Gorbachev's Historic Role

LD2612090191 Moscow TASS in English 2241 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrei Shtorkh]

[Text] Paris December 26 (TASS)—Mikhail Gorbachev is one of the figures who has played the most significant role in the history of the 20th century. French President Francois Mitterrand said on Wednesday [25 December].

He praised Gorbachev for opening up Soviet society, ending the "cold war" and boosting the disarmament process.

Mitterrand stressed France will facilitate the transfer of the former Soviet Union's powers to Russia and promote the recognition of other Commonwealth republics.

Report on EC Agreement, Need To Aid USSR

92UF0368A Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 12 Dec 91 Union Edition p 4

[Correspondent Yu. Kovalenko report: "In the Name of Europe the Queen Is Even Prepared To Sacrifice Her Head": The EC Has Approved Treaties on Currency and Economic and Political Unions"]

[Text] Maastricht—A new stage is beginning in the history of Europe. Having approved treaties on currency and economic and political unions at the meeting in Maastricht, the heads of state and government of the 12 have laid the legal foundations for the creation of federal structures of the new Europe and a broadening of the prerogatives of supranational institutions. They will permit the EC to achieve an integration unprecedented in the history of the Old Continent, pursue a single foreign and military policy, switch to a common currency and create single defenses; in a word, to accomplish the evolution from community to union.

This is a good result for all citizens of Europe. R. Lubbers, prime minister of the Netherlands, who presided at the meeting, declared at the concluding news conference held on Wednesday at 0200. All of Europe has won a big victory, Italian Foreign Minister G. De Michelis said in turn. In order to speed up transition to the ECU, I am prepared even to sacrifice my head on our guilder, Beatrix, queen of the Netherlands, joked.

In the economic and military-political spheres a united Europe of 12 states with a population of 340 million will be able to compete with the strongest of this world—the United States and Japan. But in the name of these all-European goals the EC countries have agreed to give up some of their sovereignty in important areas.

Without fear of exaggeration, observers assessed the documents approved in Maastricht as historic. They were the result of an arduous compromise and embittered debate reminiscent at certain moments, according to one participant, of "street clashes." But on several key issues the 12 countries were unable to achieve the planned goals on account of the hard-line position adopted at the meeting by British Prime Minister J. Major. As a result London was able to reserve the right not to join the single currency, to which the 11 other EC states will switch as of 1 January 1999. London also forced its Community partners to exclude from the treaty on political union sections of social policy regulating, specifically, wages and the length of the work week.

As a result some British journalists saw the results of the meeting as "Major's triumph." "This is what we wanted all along," a member of the British delegation declared. "This is the best possible treaty." But the British are in somewhat of a hurry with their assessments, perhaps. Britain will not succeed in appreciably slowing the integration processes but itself runs the risk of lagging behind the rest of Europe and finding itself on the sidelines. "The 11 do not intend shortening their stride merely because the 12th wants to stop," Jacques Delors, chairman of the European Communities Commission, emphasized.

In a special declaration devoted to our country, the EC proposed that for the development of relations, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus "commence a dialogue in a spirit of cooperation." But it skirted the tricky question of their recognition. The 12 warned here that they attach exceptional importance to observance of the Paris Charter, the Helsinki accords, and other international acts concerning disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation, the inviolability of borders, and observance of human rights, including the rights of national minorities.

Concern was expressed in Maastricht in connection with the fact that the increasing food shortage in our country might exacerbate the already tense sociopolitical atmosphere and could cause mass unrest. For this reason the Community decided to allocate extra assistance.

The treaty on political union, which runs to approximately 150 pages, records for the first time a number of new points. These include, for example, the formation of common European defenses, and all military questions here will henceforward be entrusted to the Western European Union (Greece will become its 10th member in 1992), which should nonetheless—those same British insisted on this—"complement" the efforts of the older brother in the person of NATO.

The European Community does not represent an exclusive club but it is necessary for admittance to meet the highest economic and democratic criteria. Negotiations will begin in 1992 on the admittance to the EC of new members—Austria and Switzerland. Other candidates include Finland, Norway, and Turkey.

Latin America & Caribbean

Cuba Recognizes Commonwealth States

LD2612110691 Moscow TASS in English 1043 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Sergey Sereda]

[Text] Havana December 26 (TASS)—Cuba officially recognised the independence and sovereignty of all the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as Georgia. A statement issued by the Cuban Foreign Ministry says the Cuban Government took this decision in conformity with its traditional foreign policy principles of respect for the right of nations to self-determination.

Cuban Delegation Leader Remarks on Aid, Talks

OW2612002691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "Unlike Fidel Castro, who has been committing the largest robberies of the former Soviet Union in living history, we have come to offer and give help", said Mr. Jorge Mas Canosa, head of a delegation of Cuban-American National Fund, at a press-conference held in Russia's parliament building. He said that the results of his delegation's meetings and talks with Ruslan Khasbulatov, Andrey Kozyrev and Yuriy Luzhkov had surpassed all expectations.

According to Mr. Canosa, Russia's foreign minister assured the delegation that subsidies to Fidel Castro's regime would be terminated and Soviet troops withdrawn from Cuba. Mr. Kozyrev accepted the invitation to visit the fund's headquarters in Miami during his trip to the US.

In answer to a question by an INTERFAX correspondent, Mr. Canosa said that talks with the leaders of Russia and Moscow had dealt with the possibility of Mr. Canosa arranging alternative shipments to Russia of goods that had been traditionally imported from Cuba, including nickel, sugar and citrus fruits. An agreement has also been reached on credit lines to be provided by Mr. Canosa to Russia, on barter transactions and humanitarian assistance.

Supreme Soviet

Chairman: Final Session Set for Late Dec

*LD2412165691 Moscow TASS in English
1626 GMT 24 Dec 91*

[By TASS correspondents Lyudmila Yermakova and Ivan Novikov]

[Text] Moscow December 24—"The Soviet Union still exists and will continue to exist until parliaments of all eleven independent states of the Commonwealth ratify the Alma-Ata agreements," chairman of the Chamber of Republics of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Anuarbek Alimzhanov, told the chamber today. The Union parliament, he added, must complete its work in a constitutional way.

"At least one Union body should stick to the law to the end," Alimzhanov stressed. Therefore deputies decided to hold the final session of the Supreme Soviet in late December.

During today's discussion, some deputies attempted to divert conversation into the old channel by speaking about "the inviolability of the Union and the need for its existence on the basis of socialist principles." However, this vein was quickly abandoned.

Deputies agreed they were put before a fait accompli—the Commonwealth of Independent States has been established. In this situation, deputies said, they were duty-bound, as one of the speakers said, "to abide by the principle: not to make things worse."

There is no place for stubbornness or ambitions that can only further dent the fragile accord. Moreover, deputies urged former republics to do everything possible to ensure that integration processes develop normally.

"Time will tell if this political experiment is a success," a deputy from Russia, Vladimir Lukin, said. "What is needed now is our support to strengthen a single economic and legal space and a concerted action to deal with military-strategic problems."

His colleagues agreed the Commonwealth needs coordination bodies that should have inter-national rather than supranational structures. Deputies decided to draft recommendations drawing on the experience of other countries and bring them up to the parliaments of independent states.

It was proposed that the nationwide parliament ask parliaments of the member states of the Commonwealth to send delegations to the final meeting of the Soviet Supreme Soviet. Others suggested that an extraordinary congress of USSR people's deputies be called. The latter proposal was not supported.

The Soviet Supreme Soviet has yet to pass at least two documents that were put to discussion today. These are a "Declaration of the USSR Supreme Soviet in connection with the termination of existence of the USSR and the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States," and a parliament resolution "On succession of the USSR and Union bodies of state power and administration in connection with the formation of a Commonwealth of Independent States."

After revision in parliament committees, the drafts will be submitted for consideration by a plenary meeting. The chairman announced a break in the work of the session and said that the date of the next meeting will be announced shortly.

Deputies' Group Demands Emergency Congress

*LD2612001591 Moscow Russian Television Network
in Russian 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91*

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] An action group of union deputies which is demanding an emergency congress has distributed a statement saying that the transition from the USSR to the new Commonwealth must take place with the blessing of a congress of union deputies. They still intend to hold a congress in February-March and to save the country from anarchy if the leaders of the countries of the Commonwealth do not get on top of the situation in society.

Further on Statement

*LD2512175891 Moscow TASS in English
1714 GMT 25 Dec 91*

[Text] December 25 TASS—Documents abolishing the Soviet Union as a single federative state violate both the 1922 Union treaty, the Soviet and republican constitutions and decisions of the Fifth Congress of Soviet People's Deputies, said a statement circulated by a group of deputies of the federal parliament on Wednesday [25 December].

The statement criticised Commonwealth leaders for ignoring the results of the nation-wide referendum held in the country last spring, during which the majority of people voted for the reservation of the Soviet Union as a single state.

The deputies warned about a premature euphoria around the (?reaction) of the Commonwealth of Independent States. They stressed the principles of inter-state relations proclaimed in Minsk and Alma-Ata have a declarative character and can be interpreted differently.

The deputies said the documents signed by the presidents of 11 republics do not reflect the country's economic, political and military and cultural integrity. This, as well as attempts to rush a transition towards a new statehood could paralyse the economy, cause mass unemployment, hyperinflation, poverty and famine, provoking new inter-ethnic conflicts in the country.

The statement urged the Commonwealth leaders to set up central coordinating bodies with real powers and preserve the Soviet parliament as the only body representing the interests of all peoples in the country.

The statement said the sixth congress of Soviet People's Deputies may be convened either in February or in March 1992.

Supreme Soviet Adopts Dissolution Decision

LD2612094691 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0900 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Excerpts] At the extraordinary session of the USSR Supreme Soviet—over to our correspondent's center at the Kremlin where Lyudmila Semina is at the microphone:

[Semina] The Union parliament, today at its joint session—or to be more precise, assembly—of deputies of the Soviet of the Republics and the Soviet of the Union, adopted a decision on its liquidation. Anuar Alimzhanov, chairman of the Soviet of the Republics, said that now that the president has resigned and the red flag lowered from the Kremlin, it is time for us to take our leave. This was the conclusion which Anuar Alimzhanov made: What we once dreamed of, what we spoke about, has not been realized. It is impossible to build socialism having crossed the threshhold of an era. The totalitarian system took away much in our lives, but much was accomplished, too. [passage omitted in which Deputies Shapkhayev and Nosov express opposing views on procedures regarding the dissolution of parliament]

The Soviet of the Republics of the USSR Supreme Soviet calls upon the supreme representative bodies of state power and the heads of state of the members of the Commonwealth to adopt all measures possible to ensure the rights and freedoms of citizens, irrespective of their nationality, the peaceful process of the living together of the peoples of the Commonwealth, the democratic development of statehood, goodneighborly relations and cooperation with states and peoples of the world community, and the undeviating fulfillment of international commitments arising from treaties and agreements of the USSR. They adopted a decision on the release of the members of the USSR Supreme Court, judges of the Supreme Court of Arbitration, and members of the collegium of the USSR Procurator's Office and the staff of these bodies from the fulfillment of their judicial duties in connection with the fact that the USSR no longer exists.

And so, in a brief final speech, Anuar Alimzhanov congratulated deputies on the coming New Year, and said that the New Year—the Year of the Monkey—will be difficult but not burdensome for those who observe law and order and live in harmony and carry out their labors. He hopes that everyone will maintain his honor and dignity until the next time, wherever and whenever that might be. I have concluded my report from the Kremlin.

Chairman Addresses Session

LD2612114991 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0800 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Address by Anuar Alimzhanov, chairman of the Soviet of the Republics of the USSR Supreme Soviet, to the extraordinary and final session of the USSR Supreme Soviet at the Kremlin in Moscow on 26 December—live]

[Text] Esteemed people's deputies! As you will have noticed, the flag of the Soviet Union over the Kremlin was lowered today. Yesterday evening we all witnessed how the president—the first president of this great country—resigned.

I do not know how the first session of the Supreme Soviet went, how people there felt, but I imagine that they spoke of great things, of world revolution, of social equality, of socialism, of the dream of advancing to Communism. Probably there were many good, kind, and fine words there about the future of this vast country.

Time has determined that today I am a participant in the last meeting of this body. Let us say plainly that what we dreamed of and spoke of at that first session has not come to pass. There was obviously talk there that by building Communism we were striding across whole historical epochs; but it turned out that it is not possible to stride across epochs in history. We have again turned toward capitalism; probably not toward a developed form of it, but perhaps toward its least-tamed form.

All this is history. All this is our life. Speaking about the past, of course, we must also give due tribute to the fact that, in fulfillment of the great dream spoken of at that first session, people gave up their lives. The totalitarian system took away the most elite part of our people, our young people. Herein lies its fatal nature.

But there were also victories. There was also unity. There were also exploits. Today we have reached the stage where the old has been destroyed and the new is beginning. We understand perfectly well what we have lost; what will be, we are not yet aware of. However that may be, a new Commonwealth of Independent States has been formed. This is a new phenomenon in world history. What it will show, for the time being, one can only guess at and think about. We would like this new phenomenon to preserve the very best traits of democracy, of a commonwealth of peoples. We would like it to lead people truly along a democratic path, toward social equality, toward an improvement of people's lives, toward people always working out agreement, toward avoiding war and confrontation. The commonwealth following this path will be the most important thing.

This is our last meeting. Newspapers have written about our previous meetings, that we had missed the boat and that we were dragging out the funeral, but that is the journalists' business. I think that the journalists are also in some kind of crisis now—not all, of course, but there are those who are somehow beginning to dance around the lion that has not yet been slain. In this sense, however it may be, whatever is said, it is precisely our chamber that has held out until the end. I think it has fulfilled its civic duty and the duty of deputies. It has justified the trust of our sovereign republics.

I wanted our president to resign in a human way. Whatever he is, he is a man of history. It is not up to us to judge. Today it is still too early to speak of the past. Nevertheless, as the president resigned yesterday before the entire nation, as the flag of the Soviet Union has been lowered, this means we have the full moral right to today complete our business constitutionally with a clear conscience and to hold our last sitting.

You remember that at the last meeting we had a few questions left concerning comrades being relieved of their posts that had been ratified by the Supreme Soviet. We should discuss this. Prior to this, we should discuss the draft of our declaration, of our decision. It seems to me now that even if anyone has any remarks, addenda, or wishes, we should first discuss our declaration.

I started in a businesslike way, because registering is important, not only because this is our last meeting, but to show that there is a quorum here, if journalists are interested. There is even a quorum from Belarus, which has called back its deputies, over 10 people. Present are representatives of Ukraine. Present here are all Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan. Present are deputies, people's deputies of the Soviet Union who have the right to be here at this last final meeting, the final stage of our parliament's work.

Therefore, with a clear conscience we can set about completing our business. So, on the draft of our declaration [brief break in transmission] (?the cessation) of the USSR and the setting up of the Commonwealth of Independent States. We have examined this draft. Remarks were voiced. It is necessary to discuss this now. Perhaps someone has addenda. [deputy heard speaking in the background] No, I mean in connection with the declaration. Does anybody have anything to say about the declaration? [deputies heard shouting] How will we adopt it? Basically or as a whole at once? [deputy heard saying: As a whole, at once].

Further on Union Dissolution

OW2612152191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1330 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On Thursday [26 December] the House of the Republics of the Soviet parliament passed a declaration on the dissolution of the USSR and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States saying that "relying on the will expressed by the top elected bodies of state power of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Ukraine to form the Commonwealth of Independent States the House of the Republics announces the dissolution of the USSR after the ratification of the agreement on the formation of the Commonwealth by the said states".

The House of the Republics urged the top elected bodies and heads of Commonwealth states to do their utmost to guarantee the rights and liberties of people irrespective of their nationality, the peaceful cohabitation of Commonwealth peoples, the democratic development of their states

The chairman of the house Anuarbek Alimzhanov said that the attempt to build socialism had failed. "It turned out that it is impossible to bypass historical stages, he said, and we have returned to capitalism. He expressed the hope that the new Commonwealth would lead people along the road of democracy to social equality.

"Our house, he said, stood out to the end and did its civic duty and the duty to its voters and now after the resignation of the USSR President ends its work with full constitutional right". [quotation marks as received]

The last session of the upper house of the parliament also passed a resolution relieving members of the USSR Supreme Court, the USSR Supreme Court of Arbitration and the office of the USSR Procurator as well as their staffs of their duties as of January 2, 1992 in connection with the closure of Union government bodies.

For the same reason the Chairman of the USSR State Bank Victor Gerashchenko and his first deputy Valerian Kulikov have been dismissed.

The House of the Union decided not to hold any more sessions last Monday [23 December].

Council of Union Military Committee Meets

LD2512233991 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1609 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] On December 25 the Council of the Union Committee for Affairs of the Armed Forces met for its last session. The committee decided to send draft documents calling for priority attention to the chairman of the Council of the Union, a chamber of the Soviet Union's supreme legislature, to be handed over to respective inter-state bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States. These bodies are expected to be set up on December 30. Among the documents there is a bill on the servicemen's status, draft amendments in the law on universal military service (the amendments reduce the term for active duty service to 18 months and introduce a contract system to staff the Army with soldiers and sergeants), and also the committee's resolution on the expediency of disbanding construction battalions and converting the USSR Defence Ministry construction battalions into engineering and technical units. The Committee for the Affairs of the Armed Forces will be dissolved within the terms defined for the USSR Supreme Soviet as a whole. The members of the committee do not intend to convene any other sessions.

Official Confirms Deputies Searched on Leaving

LD2512061191 Moscow TASS in English 1753 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS parliamentary correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[Text] Moscow December 23 TASS—A Russian senior official confirmed that some USSR people's deputies had been searched when leaving the Supreme Soviet's building with large-size things, but claimed Russian guards had nothing to do with it.

Soviet parliamentary council Chairman Konstantin Lubenchenko told the Central TV, deputies were searched by Russian guards.

Ivan Boyko, head of the Russian Department for Protection of Supreme State Power and Management Facilities, said staffers of the Kremlin commandant's office demanded that deputies show permissions to take out large-size things, which is envisaged by the USSR Supreme Soviet's interior regulations.

Boyko disclosed that 137,000 roubles were found in a briefcase of a certain V. [as received], when leaving the building of the former USSR Constitutional Compliance Committee. Police is [as received] now investigating the case.

Boyko failed to answer what were the things stolen from the Kremlin or the USSR parliament's building since Russia decided to take over the property.

He made no comments on rumors that carpets and computers are being stolen from the Union parliament's building in the Kremlin. He only said that 45 telephone sets have disappeared.

Political & Social

Analysts: Gorbachev Captain of 'Sinking Ship'

LD2512112391 Moscow TASS in English 0932 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS analysts Nikolay Zheleznov and Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow December 25 TASS—Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev who was the first to break the backbone of totalitarian rule and proclaimed glasnost and democracy as the main law in society, is now captain of a sinking ship called "the Soviet Union".

In early December Gorbachev said he would under no circumstances use his extraordinary powers including the Army to preserve his post. Some analysts believe Gorbachev became the first victim of "the Minsk coup", which was another serious blow after coup d'etat this August. It was not Gorbachev but American President George Bush was first informed of the signing of the new commonwealth treaty and to pronounce "the Soviet Union does not exist anymore".

Gorbachev withstood the shock stoically. He tried to convince public opinion he still had "an abundance of constructive ideas" and could not abandon his post at this turbulent time. Four days before the Alma-Ata summit of the new Commonwealth he said he did not want "to be a guest of honour at a party" and suggested his participation "to enrich the Commonwealth process" even though he did not recognise it completely.

On December 18 Gorbachev sent a letter to the Alma-Ata summit participants stressing their historical responsibility before adopting the epoch-making decision. Gorbachev put forward his proposals for the name of the Commonwealth and its citizenship.

Gorbachev contributed greatly to reform the country first as Communist Party General Secretary and later as president of a super power.

Grachev Discusses Gorbachev-Yeltsin Meeting

LD2512034691 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2128 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Report on interview with Andrey Serafimovich Grachev, head of the USSR president's press service, by correspondent A. Peslyak in the Kremlin; date not given—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] [Peslyak] "We are here in one of the Moscow Kremlin buildings; this is Room 33, the office of Andrey Serafimovich Grachev, the head of the president's press service. I will venture to say that today or tomorrow will be his last time in this office. Now, the first question: A lengthy meeting took place yesterday between the two presidents.

[Grachev] "Indeed, the meeting was thorough because he had to check out in various aspects that the political process which emerged in Belovyazhskaya Pushcha somewhat spontaneously—from his point of view—has received both state backing and public backing.

[Peslyak] "The time since the Belarus meeting and the Alma-Ata meeting's results have perhaps given an opportunity to ascertain that the process at issue here is irreversible. That was the first—and perhaps the major—element of the discussion.

[Grachev] "The two presidents—Aleksandr Nikolayevich Yakovlev joined in later—yesterday discussed the handover of power not only from one man to the other, from one president to the other but also, essentially, from one state to another, though the Commonwealth of states does not regard itself as a state and refuses to describe itself as such."

[Peslyak] Neverthless, state power exists. Indeed, it probably was necessary, as Grachev is convinced, to discuss all the details, all the minute details, to avoid any loopholes, any cracks, especially in terms of finicky problems like continuity on the defense and nuclear weapons issues.

[Grachev] "We got an idea of what was discussed when UK Prime Minister Major was telephoned. Mikhail Sergeyevich went into his office to speak to the UK prime minister. He said several times during his conversation with Major, as if on behalf of the two presidents: I am currently holding a meeting with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin; I would like to assure you, dear John, that we are very well aware of the responsibility to the country and to the world which is now borne by the leaders of our country and, in particular, the new leaders of the new Commonwealth.

"He assured him that there would be no problems over the control of the nuclear potential and nuclear weapons, that the same precise, strict, and reliable control will be maintained. He recalled that this control is stricter than the analogous U.S. systems in some respects."

[Peslyak] Grachev indicated that the final point of importance that the USSR president and the UK prime minister, who until recently was coordinator of the Big Seven—that is, the leading Western industrial states...[changes thought] He asked Major to give the maximum support to the Commonwealth and, in the first instance, to Russia, which is undertaking the role of locomotive of the future reforms and, consequently, the whole burden of those problems and those changes which will be connected with them.

At their meeting, the two presidents spoke not only of the essence of the transfer—for example, of the succession of power and its institutions—but also, evidently, of the importance of having some procedure, a method, some sort of ceremony.

[Grachev] "It seems that the whole ceremony so far has amounted only to yesterday's several-hour-long meeting. Unfortunately, we have not yet worked out any such ceremonies. Perhaps, the present meeting will be grounds for giving thought to this. Perhaps, there is still time to improvise a ceremony."

[Peslyak] Grachev also pointed out that this departure of one of our top leaders—and for our country, this has always been a leader who could be compared to a supreme commander—and this transition to another, different system of power and different institutions is being conducted in a civilized manner for the first time in our country. Hopefully, these events will not be sensationalized or turned into a political or, particularly, a personal tragedy but will evolve naturally, constitutionally, and humanely.

I don't want to call the Alma-Ata meeting yet another rubicon, but it is, generally, the principal line beyond which the contours of a new phenomenon in our common life are outlined irreversibly. Nevertheless, Mikhail Sergeyevich prepared for it, and he did have a political platform, which he expressed in his message.

[Grachev] "It dealt with the president's political initiative; with his desire and intention to explain his stand to the Alma-Ata conference participants; with the overall policy which he set forth; and, subsequently, with the text, which actually went through a whole series of amendments. I know that there were several versions of it and that his closest advisers were involved in working on it. Their names are known; I can list them, although it will not add anything in this regard: Yakovlev, Chernyayev, and Shakhnazarov. Of course, the principle which I know Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev loves to formulate and, most importantly, to follow was observed here, as in many other cases."

[Peslyak] Grachev said the thesis goes roughly: I am prepared to listen to all opinions and all stands, the most critical and the harshest—what is more, I have an interest in doing this—but I will decide myself.

"NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA carried an interview with Bakatin over the accusations against him of releasing state secrets regarding the so-called bugs in the U.S. Embassy. It was said there that this action was taken in consultation with the relevant bodies in both the union and the Russian leadership. In what form did it concern Mikhail Sergeyevich? What did the consultation process look like? Was some kind of legal assessment observed there? That is of considerable importance.

[Grachev] "Honestly, I do not know everything in that story. I am not certain that our judicial services, those which serve the intelligence services, were adequately involved."

[Peslyak] Of course, it is hard to suppose, Grachev went on, that Bakatin took the step without consultation with the two presidents, especially as he said that he did consult them. However, I admit honestly, Andrey Serafimovich added, I did not have the chance to find out from the president in what form he was consulted over this matter and to what he gave his consent. I do indeed believe that this action gave rise to a whole series of justified questions, not only here but also on the U.S. side.

"We will soon be saying ex-president and ex-supreme commander, just as we said ex-general secretary. However, in any event, he will remain a prominent political and state figure. What are his plans?

[Grachev] "You know, even if his functions were confined to running the Gorbachev Foundation, it is clear that they would not be limited to that. We are talking about a political figure and a personality of, I believe, historic proportions. This can be judged by the results of his activity and, I am sure, by what he will still be able to do for this country."

[Peslyak] Gorbachev also has a major task: to destroy another stereotype or the ice which has grown over these decades, to show that one can remain an active, influential, and effective politician without having to be surrounded by bodyguards, secretaries, and aides, rather, that one can do it together with like-minded colleagues and companions and even with political rivals, which helps most often.

"When someone changes his situation, what are those around him doing?

[Grachev] "Here, it will seem normal if the professionals within the apparatus continue their professional work. I expect that a number of such professionals—I hope the best ones—will be used by the leaders of the new Russian administration in our common case, since this is our national case. On the press service and myself, personally, I should say that this is not such a big surprise to me."

[Peslyak] Do you think we should have been thinking before and not after something happened and should deliberate on this experience after this or other political or state events take place? Incidentally, is it not a trait which is in many ways typical for our Russian character? We begin to think and analyze seriously after the fact instead of trying to preempt or forecast.

[Grachev] "I think the element of forecasting and foreseeing the events was there. A considerable number of those people who, as you know, were surrounding the president in recent time were using it. Of course, although many things—like the form it took, the dates, and so on—have turned out to be unexpected and even a surprise...

[Peslyak, interrupting] "Just a few words about what you wish for your journalist colleagues and perhaps, on the whole, for your compatriots?

[Grachev] "I enjoyed these three months in a post that is rather unusual for me. I enjoyed meeting the press and should say that I was pleased that my relationship with our own press was more complicated and sharp—and because of this, demanded more mobilization, organization, and, simply, competence—than the foreign one I knew. It would be trivial to say that it would be nice to see more professionalism; I do not have such a wish, although this is probably necessary. However, it would be nice finally to stop having to deal with the party press after all the revolutions we have been through. Newspapers and magazines continue to think that the press is still some sort of collective agitator, propagandist, and organizer. The sooner the press becomes an educator, as a maximum—and objective educator, at that—in the sphere of objectivity, culture, respect, and tolerance, the better it will be for society and for the press itself. Of course, they should not forget the main thing: information."

Gorbachev Reflects on Political Life

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[Interview with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev by Vitaliy Tretyakov, chief editor of NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, on 11 December; place not given; first four paragraphs are Tretyakov introduction: "Mikhail Gorbachev: 'I Do Not Know Any Happy Reformers'"]

[Text]**'Political Testament' of the President of the USSR?**

I believe it important to say a few words about the impression I took away with me from my meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev at such a dramatic time for both the whole country and for him personally. I would recall that the meeting took place right before the meeting of Gorbachev and Yeltsin and ended 10 minutes prior to it. Gorbachev was composed, collected, and ironic. It seemed to me that he had made for himself some very important decision, and it was this decision that was serving for him as a mainstay in the preservation of his composure. At the same time, I believe, Mikhail Gorbachev knows or believes he knows some "special move" with which he will emerge from this difficult situation with the fewest losses for himself and for his policy. And, in addition, he does not see the person to whom he could with an easy mind hand over, as his successor, supreme power over the processes occurring in the space of the former USSR. Whether such a successor is necessary or not is another matter, but being without a successor at all is too complex a situation for a great reformer.

The meeting with Yeltsin, by all accounts, disappointed Gorbachev. In any event, the severity of his opinions, personal opinions particularly, intensified following this meeting toward the morning of 12 December when he addressed a news conference in the Kremlin. At this news conference, which was shown the same day on television, much of what he had told me privately following the interview, was heard publicly—the president of the USSR's opinion of Gennadiy Burbulis, for example. Nonetheless, I will reproduce just one of my questions and M. Gorbachev's corresponding reply heard during this discussion. For today everything the president of the USSR said, this included, could also be interpreted as M. Gorbachev's "political testament." But as president of the USSR, not as the politician Gorbachev. Released from the shackles of the presidency, he should become a new, even more important and, indeed, more independent political figure. Could he?

So, I asked: "I do not believe that in the course of the interview it would have been easy for you to have answered one further question which I wanted to ask you. I am becoming increasingly convinced of the accuracy of the fact that big politics means a very great deal of dirt also."

Mikhail Gorbachev replied thus: "Had you asked this question, I would have said yes."

[Tretyakov] Mikhail Sergeyevich, do you not consider that you have entered the most difficult period of your political life?

[Gorbachev] Precisely.

The Novo-Ogarevo Process Was Not a Mistake

[Tretyakov] I will ask only about recent events and about what pertains to them. Does it not seem to you today that your policy geared to the signing of the Union Treaty and the Novo-Ogarevo process, which was incorporated in it, were a mistake?

[Gorbachev] No, I am a convinced supporter of this approach, that the Union Treaty, as the basis for reforming our unitary multinational state, is simply essential. And from the viewpoint of the accomplishment of urgent tasks I believe that reform will not succeed without concordance among the republics. Concordance is essential for us because this is the way we have taken shape, and there is nowhere else for us to go. There is today simply no possibility of splitting up and musing on whether this has turned out well or not. And concordance given the great degree of freedom as represented by, for example, the separation into national quarters and the creation of national states, even in the form of the Commonwealth, will, I believe, complicate the process of concordance and interaction. This from the viewpoint of immediate tasks. To speak on a fundamental level, I have tried recently to devote much attention to an analysis of what our Union has represented of late. This is not, after all, like it was in Europe—neighboring states deciding to unite and amalgamate their efforts to improve things—and this process is advancing with difficulty as it is—and starting to create a union. No, in that case there would be one approach, and I would be a supporter of a community, but in the way that the Europeans are approaching this. Although they are moving toward more and more integration. And today Kohl and Mitterrand are putting pressure on to ensure that there be not only economic and currency union, but political union and concordance in international policy also. This is being heard clearly there now. There, as they say, the role of Ukraine with them is being performed by Great Britain.

[Tretyakov] They are already even calling this not the European Economic Community, but Union. This is simply one further argument in your favor. True, they are starting from an entirely different base....

[Gorbachev] Yes, quite. I very much want to be free. I would like no one to suspect me of having any insidious designs. It is evidently time to say that I have no intention of laying claim to leadership in some new structures and promoting my candidacy—this is a nontopical issue for me. But the press is starting this issue: Gorbachev is adapting these structures to suit himself. This is the most primitive interpretation. No, it is the realities that interest me. Realities such as the world around us, and its interwoven nature—human, economic, strategic—for this affects strategic defense also, as it has taken shape, this affects everyone, all the republics and even the Baltic. There, too, agreement will have to be reached for if part of the structure is destroyed, it will be destroyed entirely. These are all realities. There will be great erosion, and we will have gotten a very bad situation. For this reason, I keep stressing that we need a union state, a "soft Union". "Soft" in the sense that the sovereign states would themselves come to an arrangement and themselves shape the Center that they need. But necessarily a Union. I am sure that such a structure should serve this reality. I believe, therefore, that what was correct was the treaty process, which had, in fact, been completed by August: and we should have signed the Union Treaty—it remained for the signatures to be appended, the flags were already in place, the table had been prepared, who was to sit where in alphabetical order, the speeches that were to be made had been scheduled—everything was ready. The putsch, in addition to revealing our new possibilities, and democracy already having shown its strength, at the same time destroyed this process and complicated and spurred the disintegration, not only within the framework of the state now, but of the whole of society. And it is very difficult getting everything back to what it was before. You asked what was for me the most difficult question, and I have tried to say, albeit briefly, that I am convinced that we need the Union. I hear everything and I know of the other viewpoints, but I would like to ask one more time that people think things through. You see how Ukraine rapidly—having once learned things by heart....

[Tretyakov] This is understandable. You too have availed yourself of this weapon, if memory serves. This is the normal weapon of a politician. I do not care for it much either. It contains an element of deception, undoubtedly, but....

[Gorbachev] I believe that we will have put in place many bombs if things go this way and will have muddled the whole process. It has now been agreed between Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin and myself that this initiative will go to the republics, and we have hereby shown respect. Everyone has now received the agreement, which was signed by three Slav republics. Otherwise they would, after all, have split the country from this viewpoint also.

If People Are for the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States], This Means That I Disagree With Them

[Tretyakov] Mikhail Sergeyevich, I have a direct question. You are for the Union. I also, frankly, would be very pleased were everything in this sense to remain as it was before. But Commonwealth or Union is ultimately unimportant. You are for a united economic, political, law-based space—this is, in fact, the essence of the Union....

[Gorbachev] Yes, in order to ensure more efficient interaction.

[Tretyakov] Yes, but if this has not gone the way you wanted but by way of the signing initially of this tripartite agreement, the "Slav Entente," as we call it among ourselves, and then some become affiliated, some do not, this is ultimately, for all that, 80 percent of the territory of the USSR, the three most important republics. What do you see as the fundamental flaws of this document, this agreement? What distinguishes it for the worse from the draft which you advocated?

[Gorbachev] Primarily what I have said—it means disintegration.

[Tretyakov] But the three of them have united....

[Gorbachev] Yes, but they have united in an agreement that anticipates that there will be a process of separation and that there will be a Commonwealth; that is, all will be independent states. And for this reason the process of concordance of interaction will be very complicated. It is for this reason that I object. You know, I am a person who is capable of catching all the movements that occur in society, capable of accepting them normally; I do not have a complex in respect of my interlocutors, even less can I fail to see and fail to respond to some whole currents, to such a fact as the three leaders of such republics having gotten together all the more. I am staying outside now insofar as only three got together—and reached an agreement immediately, and they announced, virtually, that the Union was "closed," that the union structures and laws do not operate. I do not acknowledge this. This is contrary to my beliefs. If there are proposals, if there are opinions, if there is a policy, if there are serious intentions with regard to changing the process of reforming the Union differently, let us have them; we have for this in our country the constitutional forms of action, but I will leave this on one side. The heart of the matter is that I, as president, availing myself today of the rights at my disposal, will work to ensure that this process proceeds within a constitutional framework. And people need to be afforded an opportunity to draw conclusions. If people support such a path, this means that I disagree with them. But this does not mean that I will abandon my position. No. This position of mine did not emerge all at once and was not born yesterday. I have been defending it for 18 months now, since I concluded that in this country we could not break away from one another. Everything was intermingled and connected here. There are no internal borders; now they have to be drawn. People have settled separately, borders notwithstanding; oblasts have been transferred from republic to republic.... It is said that Gorbachev is instigating these arguments. No, I am merely calling attention to the facts so that all this might be comprehended when decisions are made. Now I will ask a question. So what should be the attitude of someone in my position—president—toward the fact that a referendum was held and that for the first time in our national history people expressed their opinion, and today we are moving via this agreement toward another version of the interstate formation. This is no longer the Union, no longer a federation, as it was at the referendum.... We were being criticized in August even for retreating from the referendum. But it could still be shown that this was a new type, a reformed union state with a large degree of freedom and decentralization. But how should I, as president, react today?

[Tretyakov] But in a referendum, as in any poll, it all depends on how the question is formulated. This spring referendum was criticized, and rightly so. You yourself proposed that referenda be held in the republics on the question of separation, you supported this idea, in any event. This also, in my opinion, was not all that logical because the wording of the referendum question: "Are you for independence or against it?" produces an unambiguous result. For independence, naturally. It is this path that everyone has taken. And Ukraine now....

[Gorbachev] I have already explained: I do not regard independence as a challenge to the Union; secession from the Union even less. Only as realization of one's sovereignty.

[Tretyakov] "Single Union" are also words that different people understand differently. But there is a real process of disintegration. And relying on the figures of the spring referendum when there has already been an abrupt change in the situation is not the most convincing path. Do you believe it was only the putsch that interrupted this process and that, had it not occurred, the Union Treaty would have been signed and implemented?

[Gorbachev] I am sure of it.

Many Leaders of the Republics Have Changed Their Positions

[Tretyakov] Why, then, was the final draft of the Union Treaty, which already contained the signatures of the leaders of many republics, spurned?

[Gorbachev] Minds and sentiments were greatly influenced here by the process of disintegration following the putsch because some people occupied a position, a demonstratively independent position, a withdrawal from cooperation, in order to show opposition and dissociate themselves from what was connected with the putsch. This as an after-effect. And on the other hand the election campaigns, which followed in the wake of this, and many of the political steps that were taken by politicians brought them to a position where their bridges were burned. I know politicians who told me that they had to win the elections and that they had to maneuver, but I now see that some of them maneuvered in such a way that they can now no longer extricate themselves. And they have changed their positions. This is the first point. Second, I believe that what occurred not only at the time of the putsch, but also after the putsch, in the activity of the leadership of Russia evoked apprehension. And this spurred the processes of dissociation and prompted the process of disintegration. And, further—most importantly—these politicians entertain the hope—this is, I believe, an illusion—that the socioeconomic situation with them is a trifle easier and that the supply situation is with them slightly better, and that the proclamation of independence will afford them an opportunity in this difficult transition to the market to fence themselves off and protect themselves. But, then, permit me to ask: What about the market and what about this interaction? The market would then be buried. And what about the hopes for a single economic space, for concerted approaches, which can alone extricate us from the crisis? I therefore believe that with the secession of these states from the Union, the situation has become very much more complicated. I would not want to evaluate everything hurriedly now but I believe that what I am showing is based on a very stringent analysis of realities. They will be manifested in the very near future. But I will respect any choice if it is constitutional.

Yeltsin and I Disagree Only as to Methods

[Tretyakov] I specifically, and other journalists, wrote after the putsch—and received for this all kinds of unpleasant criticisms from both the supporters of Gorbachev and the supporters of Yeltsin—that the alliance of Gorbachev and Yeltsin was a temporary and tactical alliance. I was told: You are wrong, you are provoking a split between them. Surely you realized that this was a temporary tactical alliance? And if so, why did you not take account of it?

[Gorbachev] I simply believe that what I did following the August putsch I had to do. In addition, I had in my musings reached the conclusion, and spoke about this publicly, that this had been a miscalculation of mine in the tactics and realization of the course of transformations. I should have moved to unite the democratic forces before the Novo-Ogarevo process began in order that we might have gone forward along the path of reforms more quickly. Then both on questions of statehood and as far as economic reforms are concerned everything would have gone more successfully and with fewer costs. I believe that this is very serious. But I believe even now that when it comes to the focus and vision of the immediate prospects there are no fundamental differences between Yeltsin and myself. In the methods and ways of tackling these tasks, yes. There is a serious difference as regards the concept of the Union. And this is now being reflected in everything.

Commander in Chief

[Tretyakov] You have spoken often recently about the fact that you will use every opportunity you have to impart to events the course that you consider lawful and correct. You specify that you are talking only about political measures, but there constantly arises now, for all that, the question of your role as commander in chief of the Armed Forces. But then comes a series of changes in the General Staff and in the Kremlin (I refer to the change of Kremlin commandant). Is this related to recent events?

[Gorbachev] I would like to say once more as clearly as can be what, incidentally, I said at a very broad meeting at the Defense Ministry which was attended not only by members of the board, commanders of arms of the services and district commanders, but also division commanders—I advised an invitation to them for this discussion. I proceed precisely from the fact and I use my role of commander in chief to, on the one hand, display concern primarily for the Army and to try to do everything to prevent its impairment, although this is difficult in a country which is being reformed—reforms are under way in the Army also—but, nonetheless, to ensure that this most important state institution perform its function strictly as intended. I do not believe the politician who embarks on the path of using the Armed Forces to attain his political ends merits support; he should be rejected; he should be damned. The Army must be used as it was directly intended. A policy that counts on using tanks will not achieve its goal. This leads to impasse.

[Tretyakov] But were some people to take this path, and you, as commander in chief, had this lever, would you use it?

[Gorbachev] I would do everything to prevent this happening. I believe the Army is of like mind. At yesterday's meeting also I said that no one has the right, and the commanders must understand this, to play the Army card. All of us politicians must clearly understand what a man with a gun means. This must be excluded from political decisions.

[Tretyakov] It is hard to assume that in such a big country with such a large quantity of weapons and such a large number of soldiers, generals, and marshals....

[Gorbachev] There has to be consensus here. Everyone must understand this.

[Tretyakov] You have come to an arrangement on this with presidents Nazarbayev and Yeltsin and others?

[Gorbachev] Yes. All have advocated the Army performing its role. I believe they are most likely apprehensive because some processes, which are causing anxiety in the Army, are occurring and there are warning signals to the effect that people are unhappy and unsettled in connection with disarmament and the cutback—and they link this with politics. It cannot be said that no one is responding to what is happening in the Army. No, both I and all the presidents—we are paying close attention to these warnings. And we are all trying to communicate to prevent a misunderstanding arising. But I am convinced that nothing can be solved by force. This has been shown by the situation both with us and in Europe. I am not saying that measures should not be adopted against the criminal world. Strict measures and the law—these there must be. If this assumes menacing forms, if people's lives are in danger, we have the State of Emergency Act. But if people who are unhappy with policy, unhappy with the shape which their life is taking, take to the streets and protest—this question cannot be settled with tanks. This is absurd. And political deadlock.

[Tretyakov] And with what is the removal of General Lobov from the position of chief of the General Staff connected?

[Gorbachev] This is connected precisely with ensuring that everything is stable; it is not connected with pulling some people or other over onto someone's side and weakening or strengthening someone's position. I have just been talking with Lobov, incidentally, and we have agreed to continue this discussion.... A situation had arisen where this regrouping had to be undertaken to prevent an exacerbation of relations.

How Gorbachev Understands Nationality Policy

[Tretyakov] How have you viewed in your time the development of national relations in our country, the development of this situation with independence, sovereignty, the Union? I recall how about three years ago—I was working on MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI at that time—and in my presence Yegor Vladimirovich Yakovlev received from Valeriy Chalidze....

[Gorbachev] I remember this article by the American political scientist; he said definitely at that time, three years ago: Democracy in Russia is too great a luxury for this would unleash national movements, separatist included, which would be difficult to contain.

[Tretyakov] But I am not talking about what was published. I am talking about a two- or three-page memo which Yegor Vladimirovich Yakovlev handed to you via Aleksandr Nikolayevich Yakovlev. Chalidze proposed there the version at which you ultimately arrived also. That is, for the Baltic, separate status, and so forth; in a word, roughly as it was in tsarist Russia. In my view, incidentally, the Russian tsars often pursued nationality policy more intelligently than the Soviet leaders. Aside from Chalidze, other versions were surely proposed to you, and you yourself have surely thought about this. Nonetheless, why did you opt for a path which lags behind social development as a whole, behind the democratic forces, which, in my view, was what led to the impasse? Only if you say that the people were not ready for this, I am aware of this argument. What is the next argument?

[Gorbachev] Very well, I will start with the next one. I had long realized that unless we reformed our multinational state, my reforms in this country would be suffocated. Granted all the undoubted achievements of the preceding nationality policy, and there are such, it was clear that what could at one stage be kept in check, even that could not be managed. Just look at the kind of punitive measures there were, and much was simply suppressed. We could not expect to continue to pursue nationality policy in this state in this way. For me this was clear. At some early stages, when I would observe the actual processes and study the solution of this question in other countries, I would return to the history of our Russian state, when Russian writers would go to Finland and attach great significance to the activity of the Finnish Parliament and say that here, perhaps, what all of Russia needed was being developed. So you used almost the same words I did. I formulated this somewhat differently. Indeed, the tsar saw interaction with the peoples of the Transcaucasus in some forms, with Poland in another, with Finland yet another, with Bukhara a fourth, and so on.

That article suggested to me the idea that the processes of the reformation of our state would lead to our having to bear in mind differentiated relations in the new Union. But life outpaced us, and we did not have time to develop this properly. And movements of a separatist persuasion moved very strongly ahead here also, taking advantage of the democratic processes. Everything got mixed up, and we became involved in political debate in order to isolate one thing from another and, to be frank, lost time. Then, following the elections, following the formation of new supreme soviets and, particularly, in connection with Yeltsin's assumption of the office of head of the Russian Supreme Soviet, a very serious stage connected with sovereignization began to develop. And this brought about a process of disintegration, the noninterfacing of laws, the war of laws. Take as much as you can swallow; live as you want. Granted all the democratism and great substantiveness of these slogans, they also brought about much of what we are now reaping together. We were knocked off the normal track and fell behind, and this process assumed chaotic forms, and we have as a result gotten ourselves the present situation. Sovereignization was accompanied by disintegration processes, and I cannot now assume full responsibility for the fact that we have been unable to introduce to a normal channel all these transformations of the state or for what has happened. Many people have contributed to this. Participating in the political confrontation, parties have begun to exploit even this fact, which has complicated this process even more.

[Tretyakov] Who were your national relations advisers previously and who are they now? To whose opinion have you listened most?

[Gorbachev] I am a person who does not yield to one or even two opinions all at once. I know how to listen patiently, even provoking criticism of myself. But the decisions are up to me and the evaluations are up to me. I have therefore used many opinions and much information. I studied both our domestic experience and what is happening in Canada; I studied these processes in the civil war in the United States; I studied these questions in other countries, and types of states—confederations, for example—when there have been such, why they were renounced. There are confederations that are actually federations. There was a very great deal of material at my disposal. I tried to convey it both to leaders of the republics and here—to politicians in the Center. I would not, therefore, pick out anyone who influenced me directly. These are my beliefs based on very extensive cooperation with specialists and with the representatives of many republics. And how many meetings there were with the Baltic people!

[Tretyakov] Mikhail Sergeyevich, was your trip to Lithuania at the start of last year, following which it became conclusively clear that the Baltics would not remain in the Union, a mistake?

[Gorbachev] We are in a unique position—fiery processes are staring us in the face, and we are attempting not only to control them but to analyze them also. And then signals come from the Baltic countries, which have acquired independence and which have gone all around the world, and now the Baltic is beginning to seek forms of closer cooperation with all the other republics. This is the reality that has come about, no one is pushing them into this. They thought that having acquired independence, they could from this alone obtain something incredible. But this is unrealistic.

[Tretyakov] Perhaps if they had been released earlier, they would already be cooperating in accordance with the full program?

[Gorbachev] This all had to be gone through: a reorganization of thinking both by us politicians and in society. After all, much in decisionmaking depended on the tremendous pressure which is exerted on politicians. Remember prices. Remember when we suddenly agreed to start the process of price reform? All scholars said that we could not switch to new prices now, although they knew both that the pricing principle was useless and that prices did not reflect realities. Practically all of science was opposed. When all this was splashed in the papers, I was forced in Murmansk to swear that we would not raise prices. Then we began to talk about the market. How was this received? The market was anathematized. But now it is all perfectly normal, it seems. My main proposition is that both in forms of ownership and in forms of the political process people themselves must choose. You will agree that this is not all that simple. That there may be a different policy: either stimulating these processes and creating the prerequisites—legal, economic, political—or the contrary, is another matter. There are the old structures which are resisting. It is in this sense that the role of policy and the state is important.

Concerning Resignation

[Tretyakov] Mikhail Sergeyevich, you yourself have already broached a question which is now being actively discussed. This is the possibility of your resignation. Mikhail Poltoranin appeared on Russian Television yesterday; he had been meeting with journalists, and this question had come up there also. Poltoranin is close to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. Poltoranin said the following about you: Mikhail Gorbachev is undoubtedly a historic figure and he could be an honorary president of this entire Commonwealth retaining his immunity for the whole term of his authority (to prevent his getting, as Poltoranin put it, a "Honecker complex"); he could be a guarantor of the observance of human rights, the coordinator of foreign policy and democratic forces and movements in the country.... I had the impression that Mikhail Nikiforovich had not dreamed this up himself but that this was a part of some specific scenario. I have two questions: Has something of the sort not already been proposed to you? And how do you evaluate such a chain of your possible functions?

[Gorbachev] I had not heard this; you are telling me this for the first time. No, there have been no discussions, of course. I must now use all my opportunities, and they are not only command opportunities; they are connected with the fact that I, possibly, bear the greatest responsibility for all that is happening, and in order that there be a positive result and that we emerge from this crisis in a systemic fashion and become a part of a new society as quickly as possible. For me the choice has already been made; for me there can be no going back; this is ruled out. And from this viewpoint also I will use all the opportunities at my disposal until a concerted solution has been found as to the kind of state ours will be henceforward, the form which it will assume, and the institutions that will serve either the Union or the Commonwealth, whatever this is. I have spoken about my allegiance. I do not see myself in any other role, in the role of some good-luck general at a wedding even less. No. But if I see that this is in keeping with my beliefs and does not conflict with what I consider for myself important, I will think everything over once again. But if the process goes beyond the Union Treaty which we sent out, I cannot share responsibility for policy in another structure. I am not confident that this would be of benefit or would afford us an opportunity to interact, and since there would be no interaction, we would all be condemned in all republics to ordeals, and I could not then assume the responsibility. I could assume it when it is a question of a real formation and real structures. The most difficult months in our history lie ahead of us. Therefore if we acquire a formation of the "clouds in pants" type, as the vice president of Kazakhstan said at the last State Council meeting, I will not climb into these pants, let someone else wear them.

[Tretyakov] But you do not, for all that, see any prospects in this triple alliance?

[Gorbachev] Did you notice what I said in my statement? It was perfectly well considered. I isolated the way this was done, the more so in that I consider unjustified certain propositions, which, as per Mayakovskiy, "resolved to shut down America." I had to say this. But I went on to say that there are positive points, which echo the Union Treaty. We are talking about a common market and cooperation in the sphere of education, science, and culture, and so forth.... That is, there are many points of coincidence. I therefore said that if this Commonwealth Agreement is being presented as the final version, this is for me unacceptable. But if as a contribution, as something which, together with the Union Treaty, we should discuss and synthesize and on which we should reach some common understanding, this is another matter. But the mechanisms there are entirely unclear. What is clear there is merely the fact that everything is collapsing. But what will operate? There are more questions than answers.

What Gorbachev Intends Doing

[Tretyakov] And where do you intend finding the answers to these questions? Not, I hope, at this mythical Sixth Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, which, possibly, will not meet?

[Gorbachev] I have to present all these questions. A president has his duties and responsibility, which he must remember. I have to remind people that the question at the referendum was in one form—concerning the union state. I have to give the reminder that this was what was decided. And if there is a need to make a determination once again, the congress could be the form for this since this is, for all that, a constitutional process, not simply who will win. I have to suggest alternatives—let people decide. But my position is well known. We will discuss this today with Boris Nikolayevich because the process has really become complicated and muddled. The Asian part and the autonomies are pondering what has happened. This is for me very important. Nor is it a matter of indifference for the leaders of the three republics, I believe.

[Tretyakov] And do you have a meeting scheduled with Kravchuk?

[Gorbachev] I invited him. Shushkevich also. But they said that we have agreed and that Boris Nikolayevich will speak on their behalf. I consider such a meeting necessary and expedient in order to ascertain what happened and where we stand. Whether we call this the State Council or a meeting of leaders of the republics and the president is immaterial. Whatever we choose, we have so many concerns that we must investigate everything. Otherwise even bigger troubles will be heaped on top of the troubles which the people are already experiencing.

[Tretyakov] And what if they invite you to a meeting in Minsk, as the capital of the triple alliance?

[Gorbachev] This is an altogether artificial issue. They wanted by this to remove some question of the Center. But even simply the creation of some new Center, were this to be the decision, would require expenditure running into the millions. What is the point of this?

[Tretyakov] But you would agree to this, were such a proposal put to you—to meet not in Moscow but in Minsk?

[Gorbachev] I am convinced that Moscow is a good place for a meeting.

Concerning the Possibility of a Military Coup

[Tretyakov] There are a great many people now talking about an attempted coup with the active use of the military forces. What can you say about this?

[Gorbachev] I believe that democrats would not attempt this; this would discredit them completely, conclusively. Were they to do so, what kind of democrats would they be? And the reactionary forces.... Despite all their attempts to collect themselves following the putsch, to mobilize and to play on the difficulties and on what is worrying our people, they would not succeed in using the army. I am profoundly convinced of this. And I rule out a military coup.

Will Gorbachev Join the CIS?

[Tretyakov] I too, to be honest. And the following question. Granted that the idea of the CIS does not seem to you attractive or promising. But nothing comes of the Union in the way that you see it either. And you are faced with a dilemma: to go or not to go? But let us assume the situation becomes complicated. And your authority and your international political importance could appreciably help that idea, albeit not very promising, in your view, of a Commonwealth of Independent States. Could you sacrifice your understanding of the concept of the Union and join it?

[Gorbachev] I have the impression that I have answered this question. First, I will employ everything at my disposal to ensure that there be clarity on this question as quickly as possible: In what form will we live and operate henceforth? This is very important because society can no longer be kept in this state. I will respect the choice that is made by the representative authorities or the people themselves. It is a question of this choice being made constitutionally. I am categorically opposed to there now being a confrontation on the elucidation of this issue. I believe that we need in politics to use the positive aspects of this agreement to ensure that the process continues.

Who Knows Gorbachev's Intentions?

[Tretyakov] And the last question. If you recall April 1985, the start of perestroyka, and if you find yourself once again in the present day, could you call yourself a happy politician, a person who has spent these seven years almost happily?

[Gorbachev] From the viewpoint of the fact that fate has been so disposed and that I was not simply a participant, but also headed these processes, I consider that this has been a rare fate. Despite all the ordeals that have befallen me. Of course, this has been a most heavy burden. I do not know any happy reformers. But I am content with my fate. This does not mean that I am content with each day or this decision or the other. What do people not want to do with the president currently. It is sickening to read this even. And I will pass over this. What gives me strength in this situation and balance of mind—I am in a normal, balanced state—is the fact that I was not mistaken in what is most important—having embarked on this path, I myself adopted the decision to renounce the power that had come to me at some stage of history and to embark on the path of reformation, of a total dismantling of the entire system, what is more.

[Tretyakov] But, for all that, you did not at that time anticipate how all this would proceed?

[Gorbachev] I will keep this to myself. I have already said in some respects more than usual.... Who knows Gorbachev's intentions at all? Yet they are currently being elucidated. How many times were attempts made to make it known to Gorbachev in his battles at party Central Committee plenums that Gorbachev was played out because he was a captive of these conservatives, that he would never break loose, that it was in his genes....

[Tretyakov] And I wrote as much....

[Gorbachev] So, then. This is all rubbish. It is I who knows this entire machinery. Had I left it, we would not have gotten this far. Where would we be? You saw all this at the recent plenums. It was simply a punch-up, when I would defend Latsis at every plenum.... And you recall the Russian congress, when, remember: All members of the Politburo to the wall! Waste them! Crush them!

[Tretyakov] And did you not exaggerate their powers?

[Gorbachev] No, no. This was a most powerful system. I have to say that the task now is to shape real political pluralism as quickly as possible. Democracy cannot live without this. It is very important that these processes move as quickly as possible. This is the main thing now. And this condition, when people have come off the political track, also contains a certain danger for the mechanisms on which democracy should be based do not operate.

Gorbachev Interviewed on Eve of Resignation

OW2512132991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1130 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has declared that his decision, which he will announce on Wednesday [25 December] and which is "inevitable", does not mean that he is leaving the political scene. In an exclusive interview to INTERFAX correspondent Vyacheslav Terekhov late on Tuesday, December 24, he said that from now on he intends to make full use of his stature and political capital to ensure "consensus and liaison among the republics". "I will use all the influence and opportunities I have to enable the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] to function and be effective", Mr. Gorbachev stressed.

He noted that the Russian leadership are determined to implement the reforms: "We don't have an alternative nor can we have it; regress is inadmissible, and the period of vacillation is passe." According to the president, this is the most important time in our social development.

Mr. Gorbachev said that now it is necessary to "support reformers and the democratic forces, but the main thing is to support the masses, which is the key to the carrying out of the reforms."

Mr. Gorbachev called on the world community to support all the republics and especially Russia that, he said, assumes the role of a "reform locomotive." The president said that he had laid down the position in telephone talks with the British premier John Major, Germany's Helmut Kohl and France's Francois Mitterand.

Our correspondent asked: "What would you, Mikhail Sergeyevich, wish the peoples of the former USSR, the West and other countries on the eve of Christmas and the New Year?"

Mr. Gorbachev said, "I hope that the mutual understanding we reached in the late 1980's is now necessary more than when we began the process. I wish all peoples of the Earth cooperation and successes in common undertakings. We need one another. We are a single civilization. We're in the same boat."

Gorbachev Resigns as USSR President

LD2512173591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1700 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Address by USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev to the Soviet people from Moscow—live]

[Text] Dear compatriots, fellow citizens. Due to the situation which has developed with the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, I am ceasing my activity in the post of USSR president. I adopt this decision on principle. I have been firmly in favor of the independence and self-determination of people and for the sovereignty of republics but, at the same time, in favor of preserving the union state and the country's integrity. [Moscow TRUD in Russian on 26 December 1991 carries on page 1 a TASS report on Gorbachev's address. This item, entitled "M.S. Gorbachev: I Am Leaving My Post With Alarm, But Hope as Well," renders the preceeding phrase as follows: "I have been firmly in favor of the autonomy and independence of the peoples and for the sovereignty..."]

The events took a different course. A policy of splitting up the country and disassembling the state—something with which I cannot agree—has prevailed. And after the Alma-Ata meeting and the decisions adopted there, my position on that account has not changed. Besides, I am convinced that decisions of such a magnitude should have been adopted on the basis of a show of will by the people. Nevertheless, I will do all within my possibilities so that the accords signed there lead to real concord in society and make easier a way out of the crisis and the process of reforms.

Addressing you for the last time in my capacity of USSR president, I believe that it is necessary to state my appreciation of the path that has been traveled since 1985, especially as there are quite a few contradictory, superficial, and subjective views on this account. Destiny saw to it that even when I took charge of the state it was clear that all was not well with the country. There was a lot of everything—land, oil and gas, other natural wealth, to say nothing of the brains and talent with which it was endowed by God—but still our living standards were so much worse than developed countries, and were slipping farther and farther behind them.

The reason was clear even then: Society was being throttled in the jaws of the command and bureaucratic system. Doomed to serve ideology and to bear the terrible burden of the arms race, it was stretched to the limit of the possible. All the attempts at partial reform—and there were any number of them—suffered failure one after the other. The country lost its vision of the future. It was impossible to live like that any longer. What was needed was a radical change. That is why I have never, ever regretted not taking advantage of the post of general secretary merely to reign for a number of years. I would have viewed that as irresponsible and amoral. I realized that it was an extremely difficult and even risky business to begin reforms on that sort of scale and in our sort of society. Even today I am convinced of the historical correctness of the democratic reforms begun in the spring of 1985.

The process of renovating the country and the key changes in the world community have turned out to be far more difficult than could have been predicted. However, what has been done should be assessed on merit. Society has acquired freedom and liberated itself politically and socially. [Moscow TRUD renders the previous word as "spiritually."] This is the main achievement, which we have not yet fully realized because we have not yet learned how to use freedom.

Still, work of historic significance has been done. A totalitarian system, which deprived the country of an opportunity to become wealthy and prosperous a long time ago, has been liquidated. A breakthrough on the way to democratic transformations has been accomplished. Free elections, free press, religious freedoms, representative power bodies and a multiparty system have become a reality. Human rights have been recognized as the highest principle. A movement toward a mixed economy has begun. Equality of all forms of property is being established. Within the framework of land reform, the peasantry began to revive. Farmers have appeared. Millions of hectares of land have been given to rural inhabitants and city dwellers. Economic freedom for producers has been legalized. Enterprising joint-stock companies and privatization started to gain force.

While moving the economy to the market, it is important to remember that all this is done for the sake of the individual. During this difficult time, everything should be done for his social protection, especially with regard to old people and children.

We are living in a new world. The cold war is over. The arms race, the insane militarization of the country which disfigured our economy, public consciousness, and morality has been halted. The threat of world war has been taken off the agenda.

I want to underline again that during the transition period everything has been done on my part to retain reliable control of nuclear arms. We have opened to the world, renounced intervention in other people's business and the use of troops beyond the borders of our country. In return, we were shown trust, solidarity, and respect. We have become one of the main strongholds for the transformation of modern civilization by peaceful democratic principles. Peoples and nations have received real freedom of choice in seeking their way of self-determination. The search for the democratic reform of our multinational state brought us to the threshold of the conclusion of a new Union treaty.

All these changes have demanded a great amount of effort. They were conducted in a fierce fight with increasing resistance by forces representing what is old, obsolete, and reactionary by the old party and state structures, the economic apparatus, as well as by our habits, ideological prejudices, and the philosophy of levelling down and dependence. They came up against our intolerance, low level of political culture, and fear of changes. This is why we have lost so much time. The old system collapsed before the new one could start working. The crisis in society became even more acute.

I know about the dissatisfaction with the present difficult situation, about the sharp criticism of authorities at all levels as well as of my own activities. But I want to stress once again: Radical changes in such an enormous country, particularly with such a heritage, cannot happen painlessly, without difficulties and disruptions.

The August coup stretched the general crisis to its utmost limit. The most destructive element in this crisis was the collapse of statehood. Today, too, I am alarmed by our peoples' loss of their citizenship in a great country. The consequences might be very severe for everybody. I feel that it is vitally important to preserve the democratic gains of recent years. They were achieved with the suffering of our entire history and with our tragic experience. We must not renounce them in any circumstances or under any pretext. Otherwise, all hopes for better things will be buried.

I speak about all this honestly and frankly. This is my ethical duty. I want to express my gratitude today to all citizens who supported the policy of renewal in the country and joined in the implementation of democratic reforms. I am grateful to the state, political, and public figures, to millions of people abroad, to those who understood our intentions and supported them, who met us halfway in sincere cooperation with us.

I am leaving office with alarm, but hope as well—with faith in you, your wisdom, and strength of spirit. We are heirs to a great civilization. It depends on all of us and each of us now—that it should be reborn, for a modern and worthy life.

With all my soul, I wish to thank those who during these years stood alongside me in a just and good cause. Some mistakes could probably have been avoided, much could have been done better, but I am sure that sooner or later our shared efforts will achieve results. Our peoples will live in a flourishing and democratic society. I wish every one of you all the best.

Gorbachev Gives Up Supreme Commander Role

LD2512184391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1821 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—Mikhail Gorbachev has just signed a decree giving up his functions as supreme commander in chief. He handed over the right to the use of nuclear weapons to Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

As TASS was informed by Mikhail Gorbachev's office, at this moment, with the participation of Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, "the technical procedure is being carried out of the hand-over" of the nuclear button to Boris Yeltsin.

Gorbachev Interviewed by CNN 25 Dec

LD2512210991 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1941 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Interview with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev by two CNN correspondents in Moscow on 25 December—recorded; correspondents speak in English with simultaneous Russian translation]

[Text] [Male correspondent] President Gorbachev, thank you very much for managing to meet us on this, your last and very difficult day. First of all I should like to ask you: If you look back on your work as president and general secretary, was there any time when you felt that everything could have been done differently? That you felt there could have been a different outcome and that you would not have had to resign today?

[Gorbachev] So far as my choice is concerned, I would not change anything. This society was so overloaded with problems and—because a certain model had been followed—it was in a difficult position. Perestroyka and all its concomitants were prepared for by all the preceding period. And so, from the point of view of strategy, there is nothing that should have been done differently. Now, more than ever, I am convinced of this. For now there is the proof of these seven years. So far as the tactical approaches to tackling the various problems are concerned ... in the sphere of political reforms and in the sphere of economic reforms in our multiethnic state, in the consistent nature of the steps ... and particularly so far as cooperation with the democratic forces is concerned ... and generally as regards stimulating the process of developing democracy, then here I believe there were not only enormous advances and achievements—and, of course, society did change radically—but certain mistakes and miscalculations could have been avoided. This would have rendered this process less painful. Although I repeat what I said before: In a society of 300 million people and 120 languages which evolved as a multiethnic society over the centuries, it is not that simple to turn it and develop it in the direction of civilization and pan-world values. One should not nurture illusions on this score, and indeed we did not nurture them. All the same, I do feel we could have avoided certain tactical miscalculations.

[Female correspondent] President Gorbachev, the days at Foros were very hard ones for Raisa Maksimovna and your other family members. Could you tell us how they feel now, and what support they are giving you at this moment, when you have taken such a difficult decision?

[Gorbachev] Their feelings are, I think, complex, and one should not oversimplify them. Events are taking place in this family's life which cannot but affect their whole world and the people this family unites, and this family is, furthermore, an amicable one, all are of like mind. So they are indeed going through it, but they also understand that there are periods in a man's life, in his political activity.... I'm not planning to go off into the wilds, after all. I am preparing to take part in the country's political life in a new role, and in organizing the new thinking where the world community is concerned. The last conversations I had with my partners and colleagues showed that they are also keen on this activity continuing. So my family is, nevertheless, not losing heart, not getting depressed, they are behaving courageously and supporting me. Everything is fine where the family is concerned, I'd say, quite calm and stable.

And I'm glad of that.

[Male correspondent] I'd like to ask if you feel any resentment toward Boris Yeltsin for the fact that he kept pushing and pushing and finally brought about the situation leading to today's events.

[Gorbachev] I think that it would be too simple to say that pressure was put on Gorbachev on one occasion or another—and by just one man, Yeltsin—and that's how it all happened. Everything is much more complicated. It is indeed a very complex, large-scale, and important process. There was cooperation here, and there was confrontation and conflict. Of late there was more cooperation. It was growing, and it survives. I have just signed a decree giving up my powers as commander-in-chief and transferring control over nuclear weapons. The right of giving the command for their use is being transferred to Yeltsin, the president of the Russian Federation. Here is the decree. [Video shows Gorbachev holding up a document] We are just about to hold a meeting, and the formal transfer of the command will take place. So it's all in hand. I believe our collaboration is in the interests of states, in the interests of the Commonwealth, and in the interests of the world. Nevertheless, I don't want to justify the way my colleagues are conducting politics in particular episodes and the way they are tackling certain matters. I cannot agree with certain approaches which they profess. And I am talking about it, I am talking about it. I think that what matters above everything else now is that the country is waiting for decisive steps, for the interaction of all the republics, in order to get out of the crisis.

Today it is dangerous to sow seeds which whould cause confrontation in the society, or to ferment society in this way, and nobody should be allowed to do it. What we need is concord, interaction, and joining efforts, both in society and between the republics. I would particularly like to draw my colleagues attention to this, because without this we would not be able to overcome the critical stage of reforms which we are currently going through. This is what I put above everything else, pushing everything else aside, all the political preferences, both the likes and the dislikes. In the final account, everybody bears responsibility for himself, and not in the political sense, but in the ethical and moral one. I would never stoop as low as to get involved in any kind of intrigues, or any other petty activities. This is unacceptable to me, for ethical reasons.

[Female correspondent] President Gorbachev, you have said that you would like to remain active in politics, one way or another. Do you have any specific plans for the future about which you could tell us now? One more question: How would you like to be remembered by historians?

[Gorbachev] Let me answer the second question right away. I should like people to assess what has been done during these years, and I think they will do so. The difficulties and the disorder of life now prevent them from even sitting down and reflecting and chatting together about what has happened and is happening to us and about what sort of people we have become, for we have ourselves become different people and a different country. For this reason alone, we can expect that we shall change and become a democratic, prosperous, and flourishing country. We have all the prerequisites for that. Therefore, one day they will be freed from these excessive burdens of everyday life, and I think that they will then assess it properly: Yes, it was hard, but we had to make a start, and it is good that we did. We have already started dozens of times, only to stop halfway. We must not stop now. We must go forward.

I shall help the Commonwealth and all the leaders of those states, the Russian Federation above all, to enable the reforms to progress. But this does not mean that I shall agree with everything they do. If it helps to advance democratic changes, and if it develops society in the direction of the individual, I shall be with them all the way. I am perhaps more interested in success than any of them. But if it is different, I shall not ... I am not making any commitments here not to express my view and my assessments. This must be perfectly clear, and I think it is absolutely understandable.

Can you remind me of the second question?

[Female correspondent] Do you have any specific plans for the future?

[Gorbachev] Oh yes. You know, I shall answer that question a little later. Just now, I need to get my breath back and have a holiday. I am resigning. I have not had a single proper holiday in these seven years, and you know what these seven years have been like: I think each one should be counted as several in my curriculum vitae. Nevertheless, I am receiving invitations. All my colleagues assume that, above all, I must decide for myself in what form I shall participate in political processes, both in this country and in world politics. But some offers have already been made. I shall refrain from commenting on them at present.

[Male correspondent] And the final question—and we thank you again for meeting us. You are resigning, and you are, I think, aware that the country is on the verge of disintegration, that it is a very dangerous time to go. You spoke of your trepidation in your address to the people. Do you think the situation now is more dangerous than if you had resigned a year ago, or after a year?

[Gorbachev] Well, I think that now, of course, the problems, the crisis, the progress of reforms in a multiethnic state are undoubtedly more acute than a year ago. This is why concord and cooperation are so important. This is one of the reasons why I was insisting on preserving a union state, reformed union state, in order to ensure cooperation and closer interaction between all the republics in solving these very tasks. Given this, I do not want to keep frightening people—some people have said I am scare- mongering—I am not, I am merely giving a warning of danger. Furthermore, now that the Commonwealth has been established and it is embarking on working out the mechanisms which are to operate in this Commonwealth, I see that all political forces should now help the establishment of that Commonwealth, in the interest, again, of facilitating interaction in resolving all political, economic, social, and interethnic problems. I would, therefore, refrain from siding in any political in-fighting and that kind of internecine feuding which has destroyed many princedoms, and I would subordinate that to the national task—and that national task is to emerge from the crisis and move forward reforms.

[Male correspondent] Mikhail Sergeyevich, thank you very much.

[Gorbachev] Goodbye.

TASS Issues Biography of Mikhail Gorbachev

LD2512225191 Moscow TASS in English
1825 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 25 TASS—Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced his resignation on Wednesday caused by the collpase of the Soviet Union and the creation of the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

The president's decision closes a whole epoch in the history of the country and the world.

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was the first politician to show Gorbachev to the West during his 1984 visit to Great Britain as secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, responsible for agriculture. Thanks to Thatcher, Gorbachev appeared to the world as a statesman of a new formation, a man capable of taking important decisions. Describing Gorbachev Thatcher said he had an outlook which can change his country and influence the world development.

Gorbachev is acting boldly and audaciously. He has his own view of the future world. He is moving towards his goal and he will not allow anyone to stop him, Margaret Thatcher said several years later.

U.S. President George Bush gave Mikhail Gorbachev most praise. The Soviet president earned great respect for his policy, for political and economic reforms and for making the Soviet Union realise the importance of changes, Bush said welcoming Gorbachev in Washington in June, 1990.

German unification would be unthinkable without Gorbachev, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said in 1990. Germany respects Soviet presidents' efforts, the Nobel Prize proves the efforts are great, he added.

Mikhail Gorbachev was born into a peasant family on March 2, 1931, in the village of Privolnoye, Krasnogvardeisky district, Stavropol region.

He graduated from the Law Department of Moscow State University in 1955 and in 1967—from the Economic Department of the Stavropol Agricultural Institute, in which he studied by correspondence and got the qualification of a farming economist.

He started working at the age of 13. At 15 he became an assistant to a grain harvester operator.

Gorbachev joined the Soviet Communist Party in 1952. In 1955 he began his career as a Komsomol and party functionary in the Stavropol region. In 1970 he was elected first secretary of the Stavropol Territory Communist Party Committee. In 1971 he became a member of the CPSU Central Committee, in 1979-1980—non-voting and then full member of the Central Committee Politburo.

In March 1985 Gorbachev became general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

In October 1988 he became chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (Soviet parliament).

Between May 1989 and March 1990 he was chairman of the Soviet parliament.

In March 1990 Gorbachev became Soviet president.

He held the posts of chairman of the USSR Defence Council and commander-in-chief of the Soviet Armed Forces.

He is the author of the books "Perestroyka and New Thinking for Our Country and the Whole World" and "Selected Speeches and Articles."

Gorbachev is the 1990 winner of the Nobel Peace prize.

Leaders Comment on Gorbachev's Resignation

Ryzhkov Sees End of Perestroyka

LD2612160891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1425 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[Text] Moscow, 26 Dec (TASS)—"Yesterday, with the USSR president's statement on his resignation, perestroyka ended," believes Nikolay Ryzhkov, former head of the Soviet Government. In a conversation with a TASS correspondent, Ryzhkov called the present period a "time of troubles." Nevertheless, he expressed the hope that centripetal forces will gain the upper hand and the emergence of the Commonwealth will take place without tremors like those happening in Georgia.

Nikolay Ryzhkov, a close comrade-in-arms of Gorbachev in the first years of perestroyka, did not conceal his surprise at the fact that such a "master of compromise and maneuver" as the former USSR president was unable to find a place within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Nikolay Ryzhkov, who worked with Mikhail Gorbachev for seven years, from 1983, did not level any reproaches against his former chief, saying that he would not "throw mud after him."

Medvedev: Gorbachev 'Did Not Cope'

LD2612113591 Moscow TASS in English 1039 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By TASS parliamentary correspondent Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[Text] Moscow December 26 (TASS)—Renowned historian Roy Medvedev does not regard Mikhail Gorbachev's move to resign as president of the Soviet Union as a "loss" and believes he would quit the political arena completely.

"He did not cope with the stewardship of the ship which the Soviet Union was" is the verdict delivered for politician Mikhail Gorbachev by Medvedev.

Medvedev, the author of several books about Soviet leaders, maintains that "history judges by one main criteria—the state in which he accepted the country and the one in which he left it."

"Even Joseph Stalin, against whose ideology and practice I always struggled, accepted the country in the appalling state in 1924 and left it as a superpower, the international prestige of which was enhanced," Medvedev says, specifying that he "absolutely disagrees" with the methods which Stalin used to achieve this.

"I think no one needs to prove that the country, which the Soviet Union was in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, was incomparably better, given all its deficiences, than it is today," argues Medvedev, who was not only rehabilitated after the perestroika drive was launched but also elected member to the last Soviet Communist Party Central Committee.

Medvedev describes as Gorbachev's principal error "his belief, as a Party functionary, that it was enough to say and adopt a decision and everything will rapidly be implemented."

"He is very articulate, he conducts meetings skillfully, he is an experienced man in apparatus intrigues, but he failed to organise the undertaking, failed to make necessary forecasts and to choose the correct methods and pace of reforms." Medvedev believes none of Gorbachev's reforms was capped with success.

He thinks the Soviet president's activity was not successful enough at all stages. "At the initial stages, he tried to act by command and administrative methods and this was a complete failure. Then he switched to other methods—the methods of democracy and openness—but this brought about the explosion of emotions, which he could not properly channel. He generated the forces that he himself could not cope with," Medvedev concludes.

Yakovlev: Gorbachev 'Tragic Figure'

LD2512235391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 2058 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—"Gorbachev is a great and tragic figure and the ingratitude toward him which many people somehow are demonstrating in a rush today wounds me very much," admits Aleksandr Yakovlev, adviser to the USSR president who resigned today. "I am firmly convinced that Gorbachev wanted good for society and for the people. I know this for sure," said this former CPSU chief ideologist in an interview published today in LITERATURNAYA GAZETA. "All talk about him having clung to or hanging on to power is rubbish, speculation. He had absolute power, but began to give it up voluntarily."

Yakovlev, who became known as the "architect of perestroyka," admits that he did not always agree with Gorbachev, although "as a whole I accepted his general line." He thinks that "Gorbachev is far too complicated a figure for anyone to be able to say for certain what he is thinking at this time." He also calls him a "man of compromise" and expresses the conviction that in the last few years such a quality was essential, "otherwise the conflicts would from the very beginning have become far more sharp, and intolerance would have reached explosive force. Since the path of evolutionary development was chosen, and not revolutionary development, it was necessary constantly to find compromises with time," he said.

In Yakovlev's view, the chief mistake made by the initiators of perestroyka, which began in 1985, was the illusion that it seemed possible to reform the leading force of society: the party and the whole system of power. "Only later, some two years later," he admits, "the understanding began that the system that had taken shape does not accept reform, but instead rejects it."

From Yakovlev's point of view, first and foremost "the revolution must take place in overcoming ourselves." But this, he thinks, is not taking place. Thus the democrats who have come to power adhere to the same "distributing and redistributing" and "forbidding and permitting" psychology, that is, the same bolshevism. The former presidential adviser, as he admits, is very disturbed and even frightened by this "neo-bolshevism" and intolerance. He is not convinced that economic reform will be taken to its conclusion and that "there will be success in overcoming resistance in the localities to private farming; that land will get into the hands of masters. So far I do not see the forces that could ensure all of this for certain," Yakovlev noted.

TASS Carries Press Review for 25 Dec

LD2512080291 Moscow TASS in English 0631 GMT 25 Dec 91

["Press Review"—TASS headline]

[Text] Moscow December 25 TASS—The feature event, which is in the focus of attention of today's newspapers, is a TV address of Mikhail Gorbachev, which is expected tonight. It is supposed that he will announce his decision following the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] to replace the Soviet Union.

"Mikhail Gorbachev is expected to announce his resignation from the post of the president of the Soviet Union," NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA writes in this connection. "The wording of the reason for the resignation is, most probably, coordinated with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who is an intermediary between the leaders of the republics, which joined the CIS, and the president of the former USSR."

"The turning over of the control panel of nuclear weapons by the Soviet president to the president of Russia will take place immediately after Gorbachev announces his resignation," the daily TRUD writes, quoting Yeltsin's statement, made at a meeting with heads of the Russian mass media on Tuesday [24 December].

"The credo of the new Commonwealth is that agreements are concluded only by those who are interested in them," said First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Gennadiy Burbulis, according to NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA. The newspaper carries a report from the first session of the heads of government of members of the new Commonwealth, held on Tuesday. Participants in the meeting were acquainted with draft agreements, prepared by a group of experts, which outline the main spheres of possible cooperation between members of the Commonwealth.

Armed confrontation in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, continues to be given wide coverage by the press. Newspapers carry reports of TASS and their own correspondents, which say that fighting is going on in the city between armed units of the opposition and the units, which are loyal to the government and President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. "A civil war has actually been started in Georgia. Its possible scope is the main problem today," KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA writes. Gamsakhurdia's bodyguard told the newspaper's correspondent that "the president is alive and is now in a special bunker under the House of Government." According to NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, a possible outcome of these developments will depend a great deal on the stand assumed by the Georgian provinces, "on whether or not the peasants, deceived many times over, who have not been given land, support the undoubtedly legitimate president." "Army units are not taking part in the incident," an officer on duty at the anti-aircraft defence command post, located three kilometers away from the House of Government, told RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA.

Turkmenistan is going to pursue actively an independent foreign policy. It believes it is logical that the public is now concentrating its attention on the Central Asian region, Turkmen Foreign Minister Abdy Kuliyev told NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA. According to Kuliyev, relations with Asian Moslem countries will have priority importance for the Republic.

A combination of the national idea and the idea of democracy, and the creation of a strong national-democratic state on this basis can prevent a catastrophe in Russia, Doctor of Philosophy Boris Pugachev writes in his article, published by NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA.

PRAVDA carries a selection of comments on the signing of the treaty on the creation of the new Commonwealth and letters, coming to the editors, under the general heading "Echo of Alma-Ata." "The treaty on the creation of the new Commonwealth is the first step, the agreement to fulfill difficult work together," A. Altamyshev, academician of the Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences, writes in PRAVDA. He believes the upkeep of Army units deployed in Kyrgyzstan and the guarding of the border with China are among numerous problems facing the Republic. In his opinion, other CIS member states should share the expenses for these purposes. The newspaper publishes a report of its correspondents about a session of the Council of the Republics of the Soviet parliament. Addressing the session, Chairman of the Council of the Republics A. Alimzhanov said that "during the current difficult period, when the Commonwealth of Independent States is being formed to replace the Soviet Union, it is very important not to deviate from legal norms, to advance along the civilised and democratic way."

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA carries comments on the results of the Alma-Ata meeting by Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and Moldovan President Mircea Snegur.

Newspapers carry numerous comments from abroad on the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States to replace the USSR.

TRUD publishes a resolution of the Russian Government of December 19, 1991, on the liberalisation of prices, as well as supplements to it, which set the upper limit of the growth of state prices and tariffs on goods and services. "Price therapy, in Gaydar's style, is like slow torture instead of quick death," RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA writes, commenting on this resolution. Other newspapers also carry reports on this subject.

PRAVDA publishes a report from the Moscow labour exchange, which says that unemployment will affect about one million Muscovites next year. According to the forecasts of the labour exchange, in the first six months of 1992 200,000 people will lose their jobs as a result of conversion, 100,000—as a result of privatisation and bankruptcies and 50,000—as a result of the reduction of managerial staff.

International sections of newspapers carry articles about the situation in Yugoslavia, the Middle East and Latin America and publish reports of their correspondents on the response of foreign political leaders to the developments in our country.

TASS Carries Press Review for 26 Dec

LD2612101591 Moscow TASS in English 0856 GMT 26 Dec 91

["Soviet Press Review"—TASS headline; quotation marks as received]

[Text] Moscow December 26 (TASS)—Today's Moscow newspapers inform readers of President Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation and taking over control of the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Newspapers also carry reports on armed clashes in Tbilisi on their first pages.

"The most prominent reformer of the 20th century Mikhail Gorbachev has to resign from the post of Soviet president established by himself", the newspaper NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA writes in a special issue. "The great totalitarian empire founded on the ruins of the Tsarist empire in 1917 by the Communist Vladimir Lenin, has collapsed under the chaotic load of reforms initiated by the Communist Mikhail Gorbachev ... And the downfall of the empire cost him his political prestige and the post of president. Neither his brothers-in-arms, though already powerless, nor his colleagues in the West stood up for him", the paper says.

"Let us reflect upon it, we too, giving the leaving leader his due, thanking him for some deeds and regretting some other actions," thinking of the fate of the peoples, and keeping in mind the ordeals we have been undergoing and those yet to come... Gorbachev is leaving but the traces left by him in the annals of our society, of the whole world will not disappear", PRAVDA writes. [quotation marks as received]

Many newspapers focus on the issue of control over nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union.

"Possibly, the way out can be found in concentrating all tactical weapons in Russia in the near future. I understand the Commonwealth is an alliance of equal states but Russia plays a special role even among the equals", KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA comments.

"Will the Hungry People be Restrained? This is the headline under which PRAVDA reports on the plans of the Moscow authorities to create their own police of public security. "According to most approximate estimates, this innovation will cost tax payers 800 million rubles annually, the paper writes. Is it really impossible to spend this money on strengthening the Moscow chief department of internal affairs which is now in dire straits.

"Should the situation in the former Soviet Union deteriorate sharply and social upheavals occur, an anarchy or a dictatorship come, the Soviet-American relations will be thrown back to the "most frozen" point of the "cold war", PRAVDA writes in its international commentary. "It may be avoided if the West, and the United States in the first place, render us not cosmetic but real assistance," the article indicates.

"More and more alarming news come from Latvia: ethnic discrimination is gaining momentum," SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA writes.

Analysing the Russian government programme of economic reforms in SOVETSKAYA ROSSYIA, Konstantin Anuchin, president of the Nizhegorodskaya Birzha joint-stock company comes to the conclusion that the authors of the programme "try to cover the procrustean bed of the fiscal-normative system of controlling economy with new slogans... Taxes, excises and tax privileges on surplus value orientate the emerging business towards show exchanges, gambling enterprise, and credit and financial operations, that is towards arranging shows instead of baking bread", Anuchin points out.

SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA carries fragments of an interview with Tariq 'Aziz, the deputy prime minister of Iraq, who doubts the expediency of "the hasty renunciation" of socialism in the USSR.

"The traditional Russian statehood erased to the ground, a country-wide chaos bringing about a severe fall in all branches of production, a crazy merry-go-round of prices, hundreds of laws to which the people are indifferent as they were adopted without taking into account their interests—that is what is going on in your country", 'Aziz said.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA raises an issue on the necessity of working out a common military doctrine for the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

"Such a document taking into consideration defense, political and other interests of all sovereign states and approved by them can form a basis for elaborating a military doctrine by each of the Commonwealth states", according to an expert from the Center of Strategical Research of the Armed Forces General Staff.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA informs readers of the opening of a military section at the Moscow Labour Exchange. "The military section has been made a separate subdivision quite recently when it became clear the number of officers in reserve wishing to get a job has been growing with every passing week", the paper writes.

Commonwealth Affairs

Further Reportage on First Working Meeting

LD2412224691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Excerpt] The heads of the governments who signed the declaration on the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] came together for their first working meeting in Moscow today. It is known that among the priority issues, the possibilities of restoring economic ties between the former republics—now independent states—as well as the forthcoming introduction of free prices in Russia were discussed. However, here is our correspondent's report:

[Correspondent Chernyshova] Treading on thin ice; this is the main impression from the working meeting of heads of governments of the CIS which took place in Moscow today. Each of the contracting powers was trying to word its pronouncements in a proper manner. A brief verbal skirmish at the beginning was tactfully calmed down by Russian Vice Premier Gennadiy Burbulis to everyone's satisfaction.

There is one other principle for such meetings: Only those who are interested in conducting joint business will be coming to them, but even direct participation in the talks will not compel the participants to make unanimous decisions. The necessary obligations between the states begin only after the joint documents are signed. Besides, the number of participants, and accordingly, the territories on which their decisions are to be implemented, could range from two to 11.

Initially, the main aspects of economic reforms and the statute of the council of heads of states, which is to order the future work and the charter of the CIS, were on the agenda. However, the majority of representatives did not want to rush into discussion of the theoretical documents, and decided to limit themselves to economic ones, such as the beginning of reforms, the state of finances, and introduction of free prices beginning 2 January.

At this point, the thin ice of trust began to crack again. Here are some views that were expressed: The money printing press is in the hands of Russia; the state does not have enough cash; no measures to protect the citizens have been implemented; the date for introduction of free prices should be postponed for at least two weeks. As a result, there was an agreement that Russia will try to find cash, and will not postpone introduction of free prices. The final decision, however, will be made on in Minsk on 30 December.

After that, agreements on deliveries in the first quarter of next year were discussed, as well as the military budget, which was discussed behind closed doors. [passage omitted]

Burbulis Opens Meeting

LD2412180191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1618 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 24 December (TASS)—The heads of government of the states which signed the Alma-Ata declaration on the Commonwealth of Independent States gathered here today for their first working meeting. The working meeting was opened by Gennadiy Burbulis, RSFSR Secretary of State, first deputy head of the government of Russia.

The main aim of the meeting, Gennadiy Burbulis told journalists, is to work out a unified point of view on a whole series of documents which are being prepared for the meeting in Minsk on 30 December.

Gennadiy Burbulis pointed out that it is proposed to bring about the maximum coordination of the economic program which was drawn up by the Russian Federation, the main lines of which were backed by Ukraine and Belarus in Minsk on 8 December. "We will strive to embark on these measures within the Commonwealth in the least painful and most constructive manner possible." He also pointed to real difficulties, for example, with the cash and clearing money mass which will be called for following the freeing of prices and removal of wage ceilings. We will try to reach agreement, the Russian deputy premier stressed, to insure that the so-called "printing press", the currency issue policy currently in force on Russian territory, is as far as possible in keeping with the conditions under which the new states are today entering the new year. The main thing for us is to find an answer to the question: To what degree can those economic links which existed between enterprises and industries be compensated for now, given that the very principle of mutual relations between the Commonwealth member states is undergoing a radical change today.

Gennadiy Burbulis said that the Russian Federation retains its previous obligations in regard to financially maintaining the army. At the same time, he noted, it is proposed to make the harshest cuts in the military budget. These questions will be finally discussed in Minsk.

Answering a question from the TASS correspondent on the possible introduction of national currencies in the near future, the first deputy premier of the Russian government replied in the negative. In his view, any government that intends to introduce its own currency runs the danger of "getting out of the context of the planned reforms and out of the common ideas of the Commonwealth." We are embarking on the regime of reforms, Gennadiy Burbulis stressed, with a single ruble currency.

Gennadiy Burbulis said that documents determining both the procedure by which the Commonwealth itself functions, and the rules for joining it and being excluded from it, would be addopted in Minsk. I think, he said, that the principles which are being worked out could be acceptable to many republics, and also for East European countries, of the so-called former socialist community.

Disagreements on Price Liberalization

OW2412220391 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1923 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the 25 December "Soviet Business Report" feature—transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Serious disagreements arose on the date for beginning the liberalization of prices at a closed-door meeting of the heads of the Commonwealth of Independent States which came to a close on Tuesday [24 December] in Moscow. One of the participants in the meeting told INTERFAX that the Ukrainian delegation headed by Vice-President Masik came out in favor of beginning the liberalization on January 15, 1992. Russian intends to free prices on January 2nd as had been agreed at a meeting on December 8th between the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine.

The participant in the meeting, who asked not to be named, remarked that Kiev's position was supported by many of the Commonwealth governments. However, Gennadiy Burbulis, First vice- President of the Russian Government announced that Russia had no intention of postponing the beginning of price liberalization. Representatives of Central Asia and Kazakhstan said that they would be forced to put off liberalizing prices for 3 to 5 days after January 2nd.

In the end it was decided to discuss the question at the meeting of the Council of the Commonwealth government heads scheduled to take place on December 30 in Minsk.

It was announced at the meeting that the Intergovernmental Economic Commission was in recess and would not resume its work until December 30.

Shaposhnikov Comments on Military

LD2412235391 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] The heads of government of the 11 members of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] gathered in Moscow today for their first meeting.

[Correspondent A. Yaroshevskiy] The doors, which were closed to journalists, were opened slightly for a few minutes by the evening, after the prime ministers of the CIS had signed the only agreement during the meeting: on material-technical cooperation for 1992. Seventy percent of the amount contained in the 1991 treaty, and no less: that was what they all decided, although not, it is true, without some discussion.

Russia's proposal to free prices beginning 2 January came up against a counterproposal from the Ukrainian representatives: beginning 15 January, and not before. Ukraine was supported, and unanimously, it seemed.

At the height of the debate, an unruffled Marshal Shaposhnikov appeared; he made it clear that the opinion about the rapid withdrawal of the military from the countries of the Commonwealth was premature.

[Begin Shaposhnikov recording] Today an agreement was reached on the coordinated financing of the armed forces for the first month, for January. Clearly, in the future we will be adopting a quarterly budget. I maintain, and will continue to maintain, that our armed forces will never, under any circumstances, be used within our state, within our states, to settle political and national questions by military means. [end recording]

Burbulis Remarks on Commonwealth Conference

LD2412170291 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1520 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] [Announcer] In our studio now is Olga Vasilenko, who today has been to the Oktyabrskaya Hotel where the conference of heads of government of the 11 independent states is taking place. It is their first such conference, right?

[Vasilenko] Yes, indeed, and this meeting, as was stated by Gennadiy Eduardovich Burbulis, RSFSR state secretary, and first deputy chairman of the Russian Government, is significant by virtue of two circumstances. In the first place it is absolutely voluntary on the part of all the participants. Second, they all have an interest in it since there are various urgent questions connected with resolving the problems of the end of the 1991 economic year and the first quarter of 1992, and it is necessary to urgently resolve this all together.

[Announcer] Yes, everyone has been very worried about this.

[Vasilenko] Yes, and it is precisely this which is being resolved. But the meeting was closed to journalists, and in general we do not know what happened there and what was talked about. And when Burbulis appeared at the break, he was literally attacked and swamped with questions by the journalists. What did they ask him? Well, for example, does Ukraine have a dissenting position on the question of a single monetary unit? Gennadiy Eduardovich replied that, as of today, Ukraine's position is fully in agreement with the Minsk accord of 8 December. Apparently, the question of national currency will not be raised in the near future. Otherwise the state that goes in for this will fall sharply out of the general context of reforms.

As far as concerns 2 January, the day scheduled for the start of price liberalization in Russia, this date remains in force. Some of the journalists doubted this for some reason.

Well, naturally—this has been a topic of conversation all day and you have also talked about this in your Panorama program—a question was asked about yesterday's meeting between Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, president of the USSR, and Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, president of Russia. This is the reply that was given. Please listen:

[Begin Burbulis recording] Clearly, the fact that this meeting lasted very many, many hours shows that it was fruitful. An analysis was made of the results of the Alma-Ata agreements and there was a discussion of the procedure for the final legal and organizational resolution of the new structures of the Commonwealth. As I have already said, a number of joint decisions were signed between the president of the former union, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, and Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. The contents of these will be made public in the near future.

On the whole, it was stated that the Minsk and Alma-Ata process is today historically inevitable and has good prospects. Mikhail Sereyevich confirms his support for this direction and guarantees all-round assistance for its successful development.

[Reporter] Was an agreement reached about resignation?

[Burbulis] They discussed agreements but I am unable, I am not authorized, to comment on them. But I understood that this is something that will happen in the next few days. Mikhail Sergeyevich will decide. In any event, his talents, his experience, surely can find an application in the overall prospects that now,to our vast satisfaction, we all have. What role is up to him now. [end recording]

[Vasilenko] At the conference, the delegations of the independent states are working with experts. The meeting will continue tomorrow, too, but no adoption of manifestos or communiques is expected. Documents and positions are being prepared and drafted for the event that will take place on 30 December in Minsk.

Burbulis on Coordinating Powers

OW2412220491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1923 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the 25 December "Soviet Business Report" feature—transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian First Vice-President Gennadiy Burbulis expressed doubt that an interparliamentary assembly would be required in the immediate future by the Commonwealth. Mr. Burbulis said that the Commonwealth was placing its main emphasis on the economy. At the same time, however, he did not exclude the possibility of the future creation of political structures with coordinating powers.

PRAVDA Notes Ratification of Minsk Pact

92UF0354A Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
13 Dec 91 p 1

[Yevgeniy Sorokin report under the rubric "What Kind of Union Are We Choosing? And Are We Choosing?": "The Russian Parliament Has Ratified the Agreement on the Commonwealth of Independent States"]

[Text] Yesterday the Russian parliament discussed what is, without exaggeration, a historic issue—the formation of a commonwealth of independent states.

The "Brest Peace," as the agreement of the three Slav republics reached in Belovezhskaya Pushcha has already been christened, is the focus of the attention of the entire world press. Belarus and Ukraine have already ratified the agreement. It is up to Russia. Permission to speak at the session was granted to B. Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation. He said, inter alia:

We Could Not Continue Living Like This

The negotiations in Belarus were a natural consequence of the processes which have been developing of late. The country is experiencing a difficult crisis of statehood. It was clear that the union structures were not prepared for fundamental renewal. The sovereignty declarations of 1990 changed the situation fundamentally. The fate of the unitary model of the Union was in fact sealed. That entire same model of the Union with a strong center was essentially worked into the previous version of the Union treaty. In the time of the negotiations eight of the 15 republics had already turned aside from the Union. The others were still prepared to compromise and sign the Union treaty. This approach was destroyed at the time of the August putsch.

Since August the disintegration of the USSR entered a new phase, and its death throes commenced. And at this time we began to drown in agreements, broad and narrow discussions, and consultations. All this assumed the nature of some evil infinity. Against the background of a most serious economic crisis and the lack of basic essentials these games were exasperating the people increasingly. There could only have been one result from such development—the further disintegration of the country.

On 1 December the people of Ukraine voted at a referendum for independence. Ukraine refused to sign the treaty. Further instability in the world and an escalation of conflicts within the former Union could have been the consequences of this. Doing nothing under these conditions would have been simply criminal.

What Was Achieved in Minsk?

The main result is as follows. Three republics, which were founders of the USSR, stopped the process of the chaotic disintegration of the common space in which our peoples live. The sole possible formula of joint life under these conditions—a commonwealth of independent states—was found. The agreement states that the USSR ceases to exist. But I reject the charges leveled at the signatories that they willfully liquidated the USSR. The Union is no longer capable of performing a positive role in the relations among its members.

The task was to save all that was healthy that could still be saved and build a realistic model of a commonwealth. From the constitutional standpoint it has to be emphasized that having formed the Union in 1922, its founders have not lost their state sovereignty and their status and responsibility as founders of the Union.

Concerning the Treaty

The main positions and approaches had been coordinated a year ago when four republics—Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine—prepared a four-party agreement in December. It was not concluded, but its fundamental provisions have stood the test of time. The most important outcome of the negotiations was the fact that agreement was reached on interaction in the implementation of economic reform. For the first time in many months a considerable part of the economic space of the former Union will develop in accordance with a concerted economic policy. It is a question not only of movement in one direction but primarily of close interaction.

The agreements which were signed dictate the republics' wish to preserve a common unit of currency—the ruble. The introduction of national currencies by any party will be subordinate to the agreed rules. The main condition is that it not be detrimental to the partners.

It was agreed to put monetary emission under joint control, to pursue a uniform budget and tax policy and to coordinate external economic and customs policy. The agreement that the states will ensure mutual freedom of transit is of fundamental significance. Agreement was reached on the dates for the freeing of prices—as of 2 January.

In the course of the negotiations our republics arrived at a common opinion in respect of what is worrying the peoples not only of our countries but of the world also. The agreement provides for the states' close cooperation in the safeguarding of peace and security and their will to eliminate all nuclear arms and also their will to general and complete disarmament. The Commonwealth of Independent States will ensure the unity of the military-strategic space and the unity of nuclear forces under joint command. The general opinion is for the creation of a defensive alliance with a unified command of the strategic armed forces.

Then quite keen debate commenced. The result thereof could, nonetheless, have been nothing other than ratification of the "Brest Peace". It has thus taken effect. Obviously, as of this moment the Union of SSR officially ceases to exist.

Reports Poll Reaction to Commonwealth

LD2612121291 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 0900 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] According to sociological reports, 64 percent of the former USSR residents approve the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The event is regarded as an occurrence as important as the abortive coup in Moscow last August. As is known, the coup was engineered by the Communist Party's leadership actively involved. [sentence as heard] In this connection, sociologists indicate that more than half the Muscovites share the view that this is the end of the communist epoch. What people have been worried about most of all in the outgoing year have been the falling standard of living, economic disarray and the loss by the country of its superpower prestige.

Economic

Internal Debt Exceeds 1 Trillion Rubles

LD2412162991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1525 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By TASS business correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 24 Dec (TASS)—The USSR's state internal debt will exceed 1 trillion rubles by the end of the current year. As of 1 November it amounted to 995.5 billion rubles. The TASS correspondent was informed of these figures by experts from the USSR State Committee for Statistics [Goskomstat].

The state internal debt is made up of the total sum of loans which the state budget borrows from holders, loans to the finance ministries of the republics, written-off debts of enterprises and organizations (mainly agricultural), growth on deposits.

Usually Soviet experts have taken into account the following indicators: national income generated and used, the number of the population of working age, and the value of basic assets. The key question is what indicator can be considered decisive in order to portray the proportion of debt for each republic.

However the problem of distribution of debt is not mentioned in the final documents of the Alma-Ata meeting, where on 21 December the agreement on the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States was signed. Nor does it look as if this problem will be dealt with at the coming meeting of the 11 independent states in Minsk on 30 December, although in the opinion of experts it is quite obvious that in the very near future a way will have to be sought to resolve it.

According to a leading Goskomstat expert, Leonid Shpitsberg, a basic aggregated indicator has now been worked out that objectively reflects the real "responsibility" of the former Union republics for the USSR's state internal debt. If this basis is accepted, then Russia's share will amount to 61 percent of the state internal debt, Ukraine's to 16 percent, Kazakhstan's to 5 percent, Belarus' to 4 percent, Uzbekistan's to 3 percent, and so on.

Budget Deficit May Reach R200-400 Billion

LD2412210991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1745 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 24 December (TASS)—The deficit of the country's budget system, including the republican and local budgets, may reach 200-400 billion rubles [R] by yearend. This conclusion, according to figures from the "Tasta" information analysis organization, is to be drawn from the review documents of USSR Goskomstat on the country's financial position in the year 1991.

Already by October the deficit of the Union budget exceeded R102 billion, although its ceiling had been fixed at R26.7 billion. The reasons for the huge deficit are the sharp fall in budget income, which in certain cases amounted to less than 20 percent of the planned amount. The fall in incomes was in turn connected with the overall crisis in the economy and with the fall in revenue from the budgets of the republics for financing overall state programs, and the decline in duties and various forms of income other than tax.

The expenditure of the Union budget from January to October amounted to R186.9 billion (58.9 percent of the plan). Of this sum, R78 billion (42.2 percent of all expenditure) was directed to financing military expenditure; R23.5 billion to national economy, R10.8 billion to science; R7.1 billion to servicing the state internal debt; R17.8 billion to social and cultural events; R10 billion to the maintenance of the organs of power; R9.2 billion to expenses connected with foreign economic activity; R8.1 billion to specific programs; and R4.6 billion to the fund for social support to the population.

There is a crisis in the all-Union fund for stabilization of the economy, at whose expense the financing of a number of measures of all-state significance is to be implemented. As of 1 December, R33.4 billion had been remitted to the fund, while the planned expenditure for the year was R59.7 billion.

State Bank Chairman Submits Resignation

LD2412134991 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1300 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "Television News Service" newscast]

[Text] Gerashchenko, the chairman of the USSR State Bank, has submitted a resignation application. According to news agency reports this was set out in his letter to Alimzhanov, the head of the Soviet of Republics of the Union parliament. However, parliamentarians have for the time being postponed a decision on the issue of whether to accept Gerashchenko's resignation.

State Bank Chairman Denies Reform Rumors

LD2512194991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1325 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Nikita Marunov]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—No proposals to conduct a financial reform and money exchange "have arrived" from the USSR State Bank, a TASS correspondent was told today by Chairman Viktor Gerashchenko. "According to the information which I have," he continued, "this has not even been spoken of in Russian financial bodies. It is even technically impossible: It would be necessary to issue a huge amount of new notes, and the printing presses are working at their limits already." Viktor Gerashchenko did not rule out the possibility that the present rumors have an artificial source and are being spread to increase consumer demand. In connection with the issue of 500 ruble notes, the state bank chairman said that as yet it is unknown how many are to be printed: This will depend on the dynamics of prices. He also reported that large bank notes will, on the main, be sent to regions in the far north, Siberia, and the Far East where higher wages require larger amounts of cash. There will not be a long wait for thousand ruble notes: They will appear in the first six months of the coming year.

Interstate Council: Foreign Bank Not Bankrupt

LD1912180191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1652 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 19 Dec (TASS)—The Interstate Council for Overseeing Debt Servicing and the Use of Assets today issued the following statement. It says:

"The Interstate Council for Overseeing Debt Servicing and the Use of Assets announces that reports in the press that the USSR Foreign Economic Bank is bankrupt are a false interpretation of the contents of certain clarifications concerning the country's hard currency situation.

"No official actions have been taken, nor are any planned, on the part of creditors or governments in connection with the USSR Foreign Economic Bank's role as official agent for foreign debt servicing.

"Talks were held in Frankfurt yesterday with creditor banks and an agreement was signed on suspending payments. The talks will be resumed in March next year. Talks with creditors and governments are to be held in Paris tomorrow. They should result in recognition of the juridical agreement between the Foreign Economic Bank and foreign creditors."

Bank Denies Bankruptcy Reports

OW2412002791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1936 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Vneshekonombank, the USSR's central foreign trade bank, issued a rebuttal of reports that had appeared on Monday [23 December] in the Soviet media that the bank was now bankrupt. The reports had been based on Vneshekonombank's decree No 119-a.

In an interview with INTERFAX [IF], a representative of Vneshekonombank (VEB) argued that the press had "incorrectly" interpreted this document. Although he acknowledged that the bank did not have sufficient funds to carry out the majority of its usual operations—which have already in fact been halted—he categorically rebuffed the label of "bankrupt".

Citing the fact that on the territory of the former USSR there are no legal grounds for declaring bankruptcy nor are there procedures for implementing such a move, the VEB representative said that, in such circumstances, only the bank's creditors could announce that it was bankrupt—and so far they have made no such claims.

The main withdrawals from deposits, which were estimated at 150 bn [billion] in early 1991, took place during and immediately after the August putsch.

He drew attention to the fact that the document was not issued at the bank's own initiative, but resulted from a decision taken by the Inter-state Council for Supervising the Servicing of the Debt and the Utilization of Assets, which had been set up by the twelve former Soviet republics.

The VEB chairman also emphasized that the bank has not halted payments of interest due on the USSR's basic debt, nor has it stopped payment for supplies of food and medicines which are already in the USSR. It is also continuing payments in clearing currencies drawn from the funds of enterprises and organizations.

INTERFAX publishes the full text of decree No 119-a, signed on December 17, 1991 by Anatoliy Nosko, Deputy Chairnan of the Board of the USSR's Vneshekonombank:

In accordance with the decision of the Inter-State Council for Supervising the Servicing of the Debt and the Utilization of Credits (protocol of December 17, 1991, No 3):

1. To halt, as of December 17 until special instructions are issued, all types of payments abroad in freely convertible currency and in clearing currency in accounts

with the former socialist countries, as well as any transfers of funds in these currencies to the current accounts of funds held in hard currency, accounts of joint ventures, correspondent accounts of Soviet commerical banks, accounts of charitable funds and of social organizations (apart from paying off the hard currency loans made to Vneshekonombank from the above-listed accounts) with the following exceptions.

—repaying bank, financial and commercial loans;

—reimbursing deposits, short-term financial loans of the NIF [as received] type, obligations of the USSR Vneshekonombank, currency exchange operations, and operations involving precious metals;

—payments from Loro accounts of foreign banks (including the Loro account of the International Investment Bank and the International Bank for Econouic Cooperation), from type A accounts of foreign embassies, diplomatic representatives, firms, organizations and foreign citizens of type B and V;

—payment from open letters of credit for imports and transfers for payment of purchases of foodstuffs, medicines and their transport (if they have permission from the Planning and Economic Administration of Vneshekonombank—IF)

2. To halt from the date indicated paynents on current transactions in clearing and non-convertible currency to accounts with the Egyptian Arab Republic, India and Iran, carried out through centralized, currency allocations with the exception of the following:

—payments from open letters of credit for imports; transfers for payment for the purchase of foodstuffs and medicines and their transport, and also transfers for the payment good[illegible]ready located on the territory of the USSR.

3. Payments in clearing currency from the accounts of enterprises and organizations, including payments from the accounts of Soviet commercial banks, will be made without any hindrance.

All other payments in clearing and non-convertible currencies, not covered in points 2 and 3, will be made if there is a permit from the Directorate of Corresponding Relations.

Money Supply Increases by 340 Percent

LD2312144491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1402 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS business correspondent]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Dec (TASS)—The amount of cash released into circulation in the USSR during the first 11 months of this year came to 102.5 billion rubles [R]. This is 340 percent more than during the same period last year. A TASS correspondent learned this from reliable sources in the USSR State Committee for Statistics. The amount of cash held by the public on 1 November was R211 billion. The equivalent figure at the start of the year was R132 billion. Specialists believe that the population's excess of income over expenditure could amount to about R300 billion by the end of the year.

According to the specialists, the main reason for this increase in the money supply is obvious. The substantial increase in cash income is still not being accompanied by a corresponding increase in the supply of goods and services.

State Bank Official Previews New Ruble Notes

LD2612123691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 2200 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Studio interview with A. V. Voylukov, deputy chairman of the USSR State Bank, by correspondent L. Lashchenko, on the "Television News Service" newscast—live]

[Text] [video shows 500-ruble banknote] [Lashchenko] That's how a 500 ruble banknote looks today. When will people be able to hold it?

[Voylukov] Starting tomorrow we will pay salaries or make other payments with these banknotes. To tell the truth, tomorrow it will be only here in Moscow, because tomorrow we will start loading airplanes and trucks to distribute them. First, it will go to the Far East, to the north and to mining districts where salaries are high and where unfortunately there is a delay in paying out salaries.

Today, as the cost of labor continually increases, we are forced... [changes thought] just in case, we ordered 500 ruble and 1000 ruble notes. You see, a 500-ruble banknote is on the table and tomorrow we will handle it and by the end of the first quarter of the year we will have a 1000-ruble banknote.

[Lashchenko] This way we will reach a 1-million ruble note.

[Voylukov] If we work like this, we can reach a 1-million note. Some time ago we had a 1-million ruble banknote, if you recall the period of the very beginning of the creation of our former state, the Union, I mean, which soon is to cease its existence. The USSR State Bank will cease to exist alongside it. We hope that the USSR State Bank will be transformed into an interstate institution for issuing bank notes within the ruble zone. Today the ruble circulates in all former 15 Union republics.

This series meets the most modern requirements for protecting banknotes: 200, 500, and 100 rubles. To tell the truth, we are forced to somewhat modify the 100-ruble banknote. About January we will release into circulation a different modification of a 100-ruble banknote, into which additional protective elements will be added.

[Lashchenko] What will happen to these 100-ruble banknotes?

[Voylukov] They will remain in circulation, but we won't be producing them any longer.

[Lashchenko] Tomorrow, 10, five, one ruble and 50-kopeck coins enter circulation.

Yavlinskiy Comments on Price Liberalization

LD2012234191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0730 GMT 17 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Solntsev]

[Text] Tokyo, 17 Dec (TASS)—The liberalization of prices is "fundamental to market economics," but putting it into practice with a simultaneous liberalization of incomes in monopoly conditions and in the effective absence of private commerce in the disintegrating Soviet Union gives rise to very great concern. The TASS correspondent was told this by Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, co-author of the "500 Days" and "Window of Opportunity" programs, who is in Tokyo and continues to hold the post of deputy chairman of the Committee for Operational Management of the Economy, which would seem still to exist for the time being.

Having described the economic situation in the former USSR as highly explosive, Yavlinskiy refused to make forecasts about when the situation would improve. For that to happen, he thinks, we have to see how the things that should bring about an improvement are doing and how they proceed. In principle, stabilization programs either collapse in the first three or four months or they produce results within a year. However, what we have mapped out at the moment is not a stabilization program but a program, the idea of which is, as I understand it, to move from suppressed inflation to open inflation and then to move toward stabilization. Both will be painful, and only after that should some kind of balance be achieved from which one might expect positive trends. The only thing that should be clear pretty soon is what trends are getting started and which are taking hold.

Answering a question about the external debt of the former Soviet Union, the economist said that it is in excess of $80 billion.

"In relation to our potential, bearing in mind our natural resources and the numbers employed in our national economy," he noted, "this is not, of course, a tragedy. But under conditions when exports are falling by 30-40 percent a year, when the main export producing branches of industry are in a very difficult situation, when there is a slump in oil production, it is very difficult to hope that the debt can be paid."

Foreign currency needs to be accumulated, a mechanism for paying off debt set up, and someone with authority needs to be determined—this could be either the Vneshekonombank, which has a tarnished reputation, or a legal successor to it which might enjoy universal confidence.

According to Yavlinskiy, at his meetings in Tokyo with Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, a whole series of other members of the cabinet, the president of the Japanese Bank, leaders of the ruling party, and with financial and economic experts, primary attention was devoted to issues of the medium- and long-term economic prospects. Irrespective of which political configuration might arise in the near future in the place of the USSR, very serious political reforms lie ahead. "I formed the impression," he said, "that understanding was successfully reached on all of the most crucial points".

Touching on the issue of aid from Japan to the former USSR, Yavlinskiy noted that when granting humanitarian aid, Tokyo is striving to make it as effective as possible, and with this aim to be more specific about the addresses to which it was sent, working with the representatives of the local authorities in Russia. As far as economic aid is concerned, in the opinion of the Japanese leaders, an economic program is necessary as a minimum, and at least something approaching clarity in the sphere of politics. The territorial problem, he said, was not discussed at all at any official meeting.

Estonia

No Russian Objection to Enterprises Takeover

OW2412125091 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1134 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] The Estonian transport minister, Mr. Tiit Vahi, has told BF [BALTFAX] that Russia has basically no objection to all the enterprises, railways, airports, sea ports, aircraft and ships on Estonian territory which used to belong to the USSR going over to the jurisdiction of Estonia, with the exception of six grain tankers which Russia is making a claim to and which are practically the most essential part of the Estonian merchant navy. Officials from the Estonian and Russian transport ministries held negotiations in Moscow on December 20, but no specific documents have so far been signed.

Minister Briefs IAEA on Nuclear Reactors

OW2112062391 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1625 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] Lennart Meri, Estonian foreign minister presently taking part in a conference of the NATO Council on Cooperation in Brussels, informed Hans Blix, General Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], of nuclear reactors in Paldiski.

These reactors were built secretly on a Soviet military naval base.

Estonia is proposing to establish international control over the reactors in Paldiski.

On December 18th the Estonian Supreme Council passed a decision to join the treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons started in 1968.

State Minister Signs Act Liquidating KGB

LD2212035191 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1800 GMT 18 Dec 91

[Text] ETA reports that the final act liquidating the Estonian KGB was signed today on Toompea. The act was signed by Minister of State Raivo Vare; Major General Vyacheslav Sironin, representative of the Interrepublican Security Service; and Rein Sillar. Raivo Vare said the liquidation and takeover of KBG property was due to end in December, according to the Savisaar-Bakatin agreement. He added that all those who remain at their posts must leave by 31 December. The act lays down that Estonia has settled issues under debate and has drawn up an agreement for providing social safeguards that will be signed.

Lithuania

Council Recognizes 8 Former Soviet Republics

LD2512110391 Vilnius Radio Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0200 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The Lithuanian Supreme Council yesterday recognized the independence of eight former Soviet Republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The government has been instructed to begin negotiations on establishing diplomatic relations with six of these.

No mention has been made so far of establishing diplomatic relations with the remaining two, namely Georgia and Azerbaijan. The parliament's information bureau was unable to explain to Radio Vilnius why it was decided in the last two cases to recognize their independence yet refrain from further diplomatic steps.

Landsbergis Comments on CIS, Polish Ties

OW2412141191 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1345 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Speaking at the 3rd Congress of "Sajudis" which ended its work after a week-long break December 22nd, Chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament, Vytautas Landsbergis, said: "If the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] has single borders, army and currency, it will surprisingly resemble the former Soviet Union."

In the opinion of Mr. Landsbergis, Lithuania should establish full control over its eastern and western borders as soon as possible, since "the situation with the Commonwealth of Independent States remains uncertain." The Lithuanian leader pointed to another political reality, such as "the pressure from the south," having in view relations between Lithuania and Poland. In his words, the Poles "believe various misinformation too much," and the words they often use like "Polish lands," "Polish self-government bodies" and "territorial autonomy" is a mere infringement upon Lithuania's territorial integrity."

Concerning the political situation in Lithuania, Mr. Landsbergis said that "Sajudis" continues to be the main political force despite attempts by various groups to split it.

He accused the press of creating "an atmosphere of spiritual terror" and despair in Lithuania.

Speaking about the introduction of the presidential post in the republic, Mr. Landsbergis said it would increase the ruling bodies' responsibility for the implementation of economic reform.

Delegates to the congress elected Mr. Landsbergis honorary Chairman of "Sajudis" and offered his candidacy for the Lithuanian presidential post.

BF's [BALTFAX] correspondent reports from Vilnius that the Congress has adopted the new program and regulations. The new "Sajudis" regulations points out that "Sajudis" is becoming a center uniting "mostly right-wing" political forces of Lithuania.

Problems Over Polish Minority's Status Noted

OW2412213491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1918 GMT 24 Dec 91

["Diplomatic Panorama" feature—transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] According to Poland's foreign minister, "he would like to visit Lithuania as soon as possible to sign an interstate treaty, but this would demand a corresponding atmosphere, which is now absent." The minister amplified by saying that he expected actions from the Lithuanian government that "would be in line with European standards and the requirements of the world community."

This statement hints at the situation of the Polish minority in Lithuania. Concern has been expressed in Poland over the infringement on the rights of the Lithuanian Polish community, for example, in a draft legislation by the Polish Christian Nationalists Club that was sent to the Polish Sejm. The legislation demands that Lithuania take decisions to normalise the work of local governments in Vilnius and Salnicinkai regions that have large Polish communities.

The Lithuanian parliament dissolved these local governments because of their alleged support of the Moscow putschists in August 1991.

Touching on the demands of Poland's Christian Nationalists Club, Chairman of the Lithuanian Supreme Council Landsbergis described them as "absolutely groundless" in his December 22 statement. The Lithuanian parliamentary leader expressed the hope that "Poland and Lithuania will continue to develop relations of good neighbourhood."

Landsbergis Aide Briefs on Polish Relations

OW2112061991 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1625 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] The official representative for the Lithuanian parliament, Audrius Azubalis, stated at a briefing in Vilnius that Vytautas Landsbergis, chairman of the Supreme Council of Lithuania, had received a letter from Polish President Lech Walesa. The contents of the letter have not been made public.

At the same time Azubalis remarked that yesterday the leaders of the Polish organization of Lithuania had been in Warsaw.

At the briefing the words of Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski were cited "there are many problems with the Poles in Lithuania."

Azubalis denied rumours that as of January 1st, Lithuania would end Polish television. He stated that beginning in January, Eastern Television of Lithuania would be working throughout the republic, which not only will retranslate the the first Polish TV channel, but will also broadcast in Russian, Polish, Belarussian, and Lithuanian.

Trade Agreement With Russia Detailed

LD2412131691 Vilnius Radio Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0200 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] On 23 December a Lithuanian-Russian agreement is to be signed in Moscow on economic and trade exchanges next year. Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vadim Gaydar have already agreed to meet, although it is possible that during the negotiations new disagreements may arise and the signing of the document may be postponed.

But Lithuania will strive to get this agreement signed as soon as possible, hopefully this year. Economic agreement with Russia is vitally important to Lithuania because this state supplies Lithuania with basic power engineering and industrial raw materials.

So far Lithuania has signed trade agreements for next year with only four former Soviet republics. By the new year agreements with another six republics are to be signed, including Latvia, Russia, and Belarus.

Beginning next year, Lithuania and Russia intend to trade by the method of clearing. This is a new principle in the practice of former Soviet republics. It is popular in the world among the states which do not possess convertible currency. This usually involves the exchange of goods without using cash. Russia will use this method of trade with the Baltic and East European states. Meanwhile Lithuania will use this method, apart from Russia, in its trade with Kazakhstan.

Lithuania and Russia will trade at world prices, and the value of the goods will be calculated in U.S. dollars. This goods turnover will constitute 65 percent of the total Lithuanian and Russian annual goods turnover and will amount to 3 billion dollars. The remaining part of trade will take place directly between the producers and consumers.

The draft economic agreement, which will be used in the clearing trade, provides for about 200 products Lithuania intends to purchase from Russia or sell to it. Lithuania will purchase from Russia oil, gas, metal, timber, coal, and other power engineering and industrial raw materials. We will sell to Russia instruments, computing equipment, food products, consumer goods, television sets, refrigerators and other household goods, clothes, footwear, etc.

Both sides will sell on the average only half of this year's quantity of goods. For example, Russia will sell only 6 million tonnes of oil per year, which is one half of what it has been up to now. But now Lithuania will not sell oil from this quantity to Latvia and Kaliningrad Oblast as it did in recent years. Latvia and Kaliningrad will purchase oil directly from Russia and will process it at the Mazeikiai oil refinery. Thus 6 million tonnes will be sufficient for Lithuania.

The sale of natural gas will be sharply reduced by Russia. It will sell about 5.5 billion cubic meters. Meanwhile, Lithuania needs 8 billion cubic meters. This quantity will be sufficient for the needs of the population, but industrial enterprises may experience a shortage of gas, especially the Jonava artificial fertilizer works which consumes about 30 percent of all imported gas.

The state of affairs in purchasing coal from Russia is much worse, and it is completely tragic, according to Deputy Economic Minister Vytas Navickas, in acquiring metals. A few days ago Russia refused to sell ferrous metals and steel pipes to Lithuania. It promises very small quantities of aluminium, copper, and other nonferrous metals. If an agreement on the sale of these raw materials is not reached, the machine-building and construction industries may cease working. Vytas Navickas thinks that this may be a means of political pressure or blackmail because a few days ago a promise was made to sell Lithuania over 200,000 tonnes of metal.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius has no doubt that this is a political game. He stated that often only the officials of a lower rank are engaged in such political games. Lithuania, according to the prime minister, can also make use of political pressure, and this week, before the signing of the agreement, will look for a corresponding method. In the opinion of Deputy Economic Minister Vytas Navickas, food products, various components which are not produced in Russia, military products, etc., can be used as the means of such pressure. There are also calculations about the price of land on which Soviet Army units are deployed or of apartments occupied by the military. However, Navickas said, one must be very careful and diplomatic in presenting such accounts and consider real possibilities, because otherwise we may be deprived of those important raw materials whose supply we have agreed upon.

As I already mentioned, Lithuania and Russia will trade at world prices. For example, we will pay $127 for one tonne of oil, $100 for one cubic meter of natural gas. This is roughly 150 times [as heard] more than we used to pay. But the prices of goods sold by Lithuania are rising accordingly. Thus, Russia will pay Lithuania $1.60 per one kilogram of meat. Therefore neither Lithuania nor Russia will suffer losses in this case.

Navickas believes that problems may arise only if a perfect order of regulating prices is not established—that is, at the cost of buying and selling on domestic market and at the prices goods sold to Russia bring applying the clearing method. These are new problems facing both Lithuania and Russia, and both sides are not properly prepared for them. Navickas said he has doubts whether Russia would manage at all to master the clearing system because of a low organzational standard in that country. According to him, Russia might propose to temporarily give up the principle of clearing and trade not at world prices but at agreed prices, when the governments only agree about the list and quantity of goods, and the enterprises themselves negotiate prices and the settlement of accounts. This principle will be applied in Lithuania's trade with all other former Soviet republics.

On the other hand, the clearing system is useful to Lithuania in two respects. When the ruble circulates in both states, clearing limits financial influence of one side on another. Second, thanks to clearing, trade can be successful also when one country introduces its own currency. This circumstance compels Lithuania to go over to the international forms of economic cooperation.

Although it is difficult, we must get used to it, said Deputy Minister Navickas. He is heading the Lithuanian side in economic negotiations with Russia and other former Soviet republics.

Vagnorius on Trade Pact, Ties

OW2412131091 Moscow BALTFAX in English
1134 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] In an exclusive interview given to BF [BALTFAX] after a trade agreement for 1992 had been signed by Russia and Lithuania yesterday (December 23), the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Mr. Gediminas Vagnorius, said clearing operations would not be used in transactions between the two countries in the coming year (which contradicts the original intention of the Baltic states). Mr. Vagnorius also feared Russia would stop its sales of oil in the near future, which meant that Lithuania, which was short of fuel even now, would have to buy oil elsewhere. Asked whether Lithuania was planning to join the Community of Independent States, Mr. Vagnorius said, "We cannot do this." As for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Lithuanian territory, he thought that at present this entirely depended on the Russian government. In his opinion, "It would be quite possible to withdraw all the troops in the course of 1992, except, perhaps, for the strategic forces."

Supreme Soviet

Yeltsin Addresses Supreme Soviet

LD2512144991 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1228 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Speech by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin to the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet in Moscow on 25 December—recorded]

[Text] Esteemed chairman! Esteemed People's Deputies! Citizens of the Russian Federation!

In Alma-Ata on 21 December there took place an event which has played a considerable role in the destiny of the new states on the territory of the former Union. This event will undoubtedly exert an influence on the life of the entire world community. The results of the Alma-Ata meeting are known to you. The main thing is this: The Commonwealth created on the initiative of Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine has been joined by new states—Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

We are now eleven, the majority of the republics of the former Union. All the states of the Commonwealth have the lofty status of founders with equal rights. Nobody is encroached upon and nobody has been allotted any kind of privileges.

Our Commonwealth has been formed in an extremely short time. Only two weeks have passed since the moment the Minsk agreement was signed. This is a pace that matches the demands of today. I do not agree with those who speak of a certain hurry or, even, haste. The model of the Commonwealth was not invented in offices of power. It was prompted by life itself and by the reailities that have come into being.

If one is to look at things objectively, then following the referendum in the Ukraine and other events, the conclusion had to be drawn that a federal or even a confederal state could no longer be formed. There were only two alternatives—either to let everything go its own way, and observe the further uncontrolled decay of the Union, with unrealizable aims being set, or to start building a commonwealth of independent states in new conditions, with a unified economic space, open internal borders and a harmonized political line and harmonized reforms. We immediately rejected the first path. It was too risky, both for Russia and for the entire world. A country packed with nuclear arms did not have the right to such a choice. So far we have managed to avoid the most important thing—the chain reaction of confrontation that was a possibility. The very acute economic crisis and the mass of interethnic problems inherited from the past, the painful transition to a market that was under way and the change in the socio-political structure, and so on—obviously the concentration of flammable political material had reached a critical point.

The independent states which have arisen in place of the Union have displayed a high sense of responsibility. The Commonwealth of Independent States is today the optimum and perhaps the only option to preserve stability both in Russia and in the other states. Our principle is: Not the states for the sake of the Commonwealth, but on the contrary, the Commonwealth for the sake of the peoples, citizens and states.

For the first time in our history, an association is coming into being that does not demand sacrifice of what is most precious and dear to us—freedom and independence. Our countries have embarked on the road of a civilized, peaceful and legal building of their statehood, of consolidation of independence and sensible application of the freedom they have gained. Together, we came to a simple and clear conclusion: that it is much more advantageous and effective to do this not to one another's detriment, but on the basis of mutual support and respect. The Commonwealth gives each state greater stability and more predictability in the behavior of its partners.

Most importantly, a new environment of trust is created in the relations between our countries, a new morality based on norms of behavior that are jointly elaborated and voluntarily adopted by every participant.

At the same time, I must emphasize that it is not some kind of military alliance or military bloc that has been created. The Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] is a peaceful commonwealth—political and economic. But what has occurred has its painful side, too. The USSR no longer exists. The fact that this has happened pulls at the hearts of millions of people at various ends of a state which no longer exists, and far beyond its borders. I believe that we all acutely sense the dramatic nature of the times we are living through. The most complex questions need to be solved and the interests of the 11 independent states, which over the past decades have been well protected against diktat and totalitarian pressure, must be coordinated.

I consider the Alma-Ata meeting to have been a successful one. Six fundamental documents were signed. First, the protocol to the Brest agreement, according to which all the states which joined the Commonwealth on 21 December become its co-founders and receive the same rights as the initiators of the agreements.

Second, the Alma-Ata declaration has been adopted. This is a document of a political nature and it sets out the basic principles by which the independent states of the Commonwealth will be guided. A most important point of this document is the recognition of each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders. The 11 states reaffirmed the opinion that we are forming not a new state but precisely a commonwealth of states without a center. The coordinating bodies are being created on an inter-state basis—this will be decided upon on 30 December when we assemble in Minsk.

It is recorded here: The Commonwealth is open to other states joining it if they share the objectives and principles of the Commonwealth and if all the participants in it consent to this.

Third, an important decision was adopted at Alma-Ata regarding the membership of the member-states in the UN Organization. Everyone spoke in favor of the USSR's membership in the United Nations being continued by Russia, including membership in the Security Council.

Fourth, the appropriate documents have already been sent—during the course of the talks the supreme bodies of the Commonwealth for the coordination of activities were defined. That is a Council of Heads of State and a Council of Heads of Governments. The corresponding agreement has been signed.

Fifth, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Ukraine, and Belarus concluded an agreement on nuclear arms. I see this as being of fundamental importance. It consolidates the idea that a policy on nuclear issues will be developed jointly. The states confirmed their obligation to refrain from first use of nuclear arms as well as their adherence to the principle of nonproliferation.

Fourth.... [corrects himself] The four states agreed not to transfer nuclear arms or nuclear explosive devices and technology to anybody, nor to encourage nonnuclear states to produce nuclear arms or to acquire them. Through this agreement our states also confirmed their efforts toward eliminating all nuclear weapons, despite the fact that certain differences in solving this issue remain, for example Kazakhstan's special position. Kazakhstan intends to synchronize this process with Russia. The Ukraine and Belarus expressed their desire to join the 1968 treaty on nonproliferation of nuclear arms as nonnuclear states. The agreement stipulates that by 1 July 1992, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Ukraine will have ensured the withdrawal of all tactical nuclear arms to central depots at works [predzavodskiye bazy] in order to dismantle them [razukomplektovaniye].

Finally, the issue which is worrying many people, in other countries as well: the Union's nuclear button. I think there should be not a second's delay today. As soon as the country's president announces his resignation, it will be handed over to the president of Russia. There will be only one nuclear button. Other republics will not be in possession of it. But to press it—if necessary—the consent of the four participants in the agreement, the nuclear republics, is required promptly, by telephone via special communication. Of course, we proceed from the fact that this button must never be pushed.

Taking into account the fundamental importance of this issue, heads of states adopted a decision to submit the accord on joint measures regarding nuclear arms for ratification by the supreme soviets of the republics. This document has been distributed to you, Esteemed Deputies. I express the hope that it will be ratified today.

The Alma-Ata summit laid the foundations for a coordinated economic policy by the 11 states. The principles enshrined in the Minsk agreement have won the support of all the participants in the talks. The participants in the talks have confirmed their commitment to radical reform, which will allow the gravely ill economy to get back on its feet.

One more issue was examined at the summit. Because the Union has ceased to exist, it was necessary to define our stance regarding [lengthy pause] Gorbachev. There is no post of president envisioned for the Commonwealth. It was important to break a damaging tradition that has long existed in our country: Leaders of the country leave their post and are removed from politics and society, consigned to oblivion, and then either reburied after death or vilified, at least. A decision has been made that will allow Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev to continue to play an active role in society after his departure from the post of Union president. A decision on his financial security has also been made by all the members of the Commonwealth, the heads of state.

On 30 December, as I have said, there will be another summit in Minsk at which we will continue the negotiations. Under discussion, in particular, will be the coordinating bodies for the Commonwealth and the reconstitution of the Armed Forces. An appropriate protocol was also adopted in Alma-Ata.

Esteemed people's deputies, a few days ago I made an official visit to Italy. A few words on the results. This was the first visit since the establishment of the Union [as heard] of Independent States, and it was significant in terms of confirming Russia's status as a subject in international law. The agenda for the visit was fairly hectic; the results, in my opinion, exceeded all expectations.

The principal document signed during the visit was a joint declaration on the basis for relations between our countries. We also agreed on coordinating work in defense industry conversion, concluded an agreement on cultural cooperation, and confirmed 12 agreements signed earlier with the union.

The most important theme during the talks was economic cooperation. We have received serious guarantees from Italy that it will support the reforms in Russia in word and deed. An Italian credit of $6 billion to the USSR has been unfrozen. Eighty percent of this credit will now go to Russia. Another agreement was signed under which the Russian Federation is to receive $1.5 billion worth of food, mainly for the winter. Also signed was a memorandum on cooperation between the Russian Government and the Italian state sector corporation ENI. A contract was concluded between the Russian state sector concern Gazprom and the firm (?Bioprodotti Italia Promeggia) for delivery to Russia of a major consignment of baby food. I can definitely say that Russia is being taken notice of in Europe, America, and elsewhere in the world. A meeting in the Vatican with Pope John Paul II greatly enriched my visit to Italy.

During the meeting, the Vatican's desire for dialogue with the Orthodox Church and the importance of Russian Orthodoxy in the destiny of Europe were stressed.

Esteemed People's Deputies, I believe that the events I have been telling you about today are of fundamental importance. A difficult year lies ahead for us. We have come face to face with the most important measures in the economic reform. In the past few months a great deal has been done to ensure that they take place. Without the Commonwealth it would be many times more difficult for us; it is therefore our common duty to work to strengthen it.

I would like to take this opportunity to greet you, esteemed deputies, on the approaching New Year and on Christmas, of course, and to wish you good health and success in your busy activities. Thank you.

Answers Deputies' Questions

LD2512182391

[Editorial Report] Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian at 1244 GMT on 25 December carries a recording of a question-and-answer session between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and deputies of the Russian Supreme Soviet on 25 December, following Yeltsin's address to that body.

Deputy (Varukhin) asks about continuing the call-up of young men for service, with some of them being sent to areas of conflict in other states. Yeltsin replies:

"Taking into consideration that we, the Supreme Soviet, have adopted a law.... [changes thought] But as you know, before the adoption of this law, troops from both the Army and internal troops were already in certain republics and are there today. We did quite a lot of preparatory work on how to begin the process of withdrawing these troops, all the more so since these are for the most part Russian lads.

"The withdrawal of the Nizhniy Novgorod regiment of internal troops from Nagorno-Karabakh began yesterday. We have 2,400 men included in the troops there in Nagorno-Karabakh. Yesterday, in the course of one day, one complete regiment was withdrawn—700 men. Today 600 men will be withdrawn, and this process will continue.

"As for the Army, considering that Georgia has not joined—or, to be more precise, has expressed the desire, but the conference of heads of the Commonwealth considered that the republic has so far not put its affairs in order and we therefore cannot accept it as a Commonwealth country—for that reason, our Armed Forces also will be withdrawn from there, including the Army. This process has now begun in earnest, and it will continue. In the future it will be easier not to send them."

Deputy Sheynis asks about the reservations expressed by the Ukraine, particularly about the Commonwealth agreements, and how closely states which have expressed such reservations will be bound by the agreements. Yeltsin replies that all 11 states signed the accords in the form ratified by the Russian Supreme Soviet. Although further discussion may follow, they will all observe all the points of the agreements, he says.

Deputy (Syryev) asks whether the Supreme Soviet was to have a committee on defense matters. Yeltsin replies:

"My opinion is that, in view of the situation that has come about, we first need to form a Russian Ministry of Defense. Second, both the Supreme Soviet and the presidential service.... [changes thought] We need a committee in the Supreme Soviet, probably, or a commission—that is for you to decide. There is within the Presidency a defense department under the president of the Union; taking the high qualifications of its experts into account, we are effectively taking this department into the Russian presidential service almost in its entirety."

Another deputy asks Yeltsin about his use of the title of president of Russia and of the Russian Federation as the name of the state when he was elected president of the RSFSR and swore to uphold the Constitution of the RSFSR. Ruslan Khasbulatov, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, intervenes and proposes a vote on changing the name of the state. A vote was held on changing the name to "the Russian Federation (Russia)," and it was passed. Yeltsin reminds everyone that the agreements in Minsk and Alma-Ata do contain the proper formal name of the time, the RSFSR.

Deputy Manayenkov expresses fears that the feelings of domination by the center which contributed to the disintegration of the USSR could now have a similar effect on Russia. He dwells on the example of Murmansk Oblast and Karelia and difficulties in making contact with officials in Moscow. He suggests that they might even want to set up a commonwealth of their own with Baltic and Scandinavian states. Yeltsin replies that he did not think such problems would arise. He said a large delegation from Karelia was recently in Moscow and the problems had been discussed and resolved. He states:

"A treaty process has now begun, and it will in fact lift this pressure. If some republic—I do not know, but so far three have made declarations—wants to sign separate agreements apart from this, we are ready for this. As for other states, we did not sign an agreement saying that only countries and states of the former Union can be included. Others can join this Commonwealth, too. That would be an interesting option. But not right away."

Republic Name Changed to 'Russian Federation'

LD2512100991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0944 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Galina Vinitskaya]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)— From now on, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic will be called "The Russian Federation (Russia)", as voted for by the Supreme Soviet today.

According to Boris Yeltsin, the republic is to set up its own ministry of defense and is aware of the highly-qualified specialists in the USSR president's defense department. Nearly all of the department's staff are to switch to the Russian president.

Alma-Ata Nuclear Agreement Ratified

LD2512102891 Moscow TASS in English 1021 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS parliamentary correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[Text] Moscow December 25 (TASS)—The Russian Supreme Soviet today ratified "The Agreement on Joint Measures With Regard to Nuclear Weapons", signed by the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine in Alma-Ata on December 21.

In the agreement, the republics reaffirm their renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons. The decision to use them is taken by the Russian president upon consulting with heads of states, members of the agreement.

Yeltsin Outlines Nuclear Weapons Procedure

LD2512212191 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1644 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Exchange between Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Russian Supreme Soviet Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, and Russian Deputy Vladimir Borisovich Isakov at the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, RSFSR, Supreme Soviet session in the Kremlin on 25 December; from the "At the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Session" program—recorded]

[Text] [Khasbulatov] Esteemed Deputies, I would ask you now to familiarize yourselves with the resolution of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet—sorry, with its draft resolution. It is very brief and says: The RSFSR Supreme Soviet resolves that the agreement on joint measures regarding nuclear weapons, which was signed by the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, RSFSR—this now needs to read Russian Federation, Russia—and the Ukraine on 21 December 1991 in the city of Alma-Ata, be ratified. So, esteemed deputies, are there any views on this draft? Right, number four please, Vladimir Borisovich.

[Isakov] Deputy Isakov. Before we vote, I would like to listen to the findings of the military specialists on this issue. Unfortunately we have not yet concluded an agreement between nuclear powers on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons. The flight time now is very short, and I do not know how in a nuclear first strike it would be possible to implement the procedure envisaged in this agreement, namely, to telephone and obtain agreement on this. I would like to get the precise and clear view of the military specialists on whether this agreement ensures the security of our state and whether it can be implemented in practice under the conditions of a nuclear first strike, which unfortunately cannot be ruled out.

[Khasbulatov] Right, Boris Nikolayevich, please.

[Yeltsin] First, given that today evidently this, so to speak, attache case device will in the presence of the former Union defense minister, now the commander of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth states, be handed over from the Union president to the Russian president there can be no other control by each republic. This is technically ruled out. That is the first point.

Second, from the standpoint of consultations, I would not want to tell you here the technical details which are still to some extent secret, but nevertheless let me tell you that each of the four presidents is having installed a so-called conference telephone, where we can instantly locate each other, instantly confer and make a decision, and then the Russian president has to carry out the ensuing action.

[Khasbulatov] Later, Boris Nikolayevich, it is evidently still a matter of a whole series of agreements in the development of a common strategic...

[Yeltsin, interrupting] Certainly. First we have agreed that we confirm all the treaties and agreements adopted by the Union, including on this issue. Second, regarding the SALT treaty which has still not been ratified by the Union Supreme Soviet, although it was signed—this last treaty—we have agreed to assemble with the supreme soviets of the four republics at one and the same time and at one and the same hour and to ratify it, this SALT treaty, by the four nuclear powers and their supreme soviets. When I was speaking with Bush, he agreed with this procedure and regards it as the most correct decision.

KGB, Interior Ministry Merger Discussed

LD2412160191 Moscow TASS in English 1536 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[Text] Moscow December 24 TASS—At the initiative of four committees, the Russian Supreme Soviet (parliament) today held hearings into the merger of the State Security Committee [KGB] and the Ministry of the Interior. The relevant decree by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin was published on December 20.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Shakhray told the parliament the merger of the two agencies was impossible because there was a psychological and professional incompatibility of the KGB and the Interior Ministry, monopolism in combatting crime and corruption in law-enforcement bodies. The latter, he said, could "infect" the newly established Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs.

He said that could be avoided if the new super-ministry was subordinated to the Russian Federation president through its chairman and first deputy, if parliamentary control over the activity of the ministry was established on the basis of the Russian Federation law on security.

Former Deputy Interior Minister of the USSR Viktor Yerin favoured merging the two structures to avoid duplicating each other and delineating more clearly responsibilities, particularly in combatting drug trafficking, corruption and terrorism.

Many deputies took to task Yeltsin for failing to consult with the parliament before issuing the decree. Even security adviser Yuriy Skokov said he had learned about the decree from newspapers.

Deputy Vladimir Varov summed up discussions by saying: "Who owns information rules the world. When channels of information will be monopolised by the Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs, a biased assessment of events cannot be ruled out. In most developed countries the administration uses alternative channels of information to make its own conclusions."

Deputies said they would demand the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet put the question of the Russian president's decree on the agenda and try convince Yeltsin of the need to divide the functions of the Interior Ministry and the KGB.

Investigation Commission Holds News Conference

LD2512174391 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1540 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] A news conference by the Russian parliament Presidium's commission investigating the causes and circumstances of the 19 August attempted coup d'etat was held today. Our correspondent Aleskandr Ruvinskiy was there.

[Ruvinskiy] Deputy Lev Ponomarev, the commission's chairman, said that the commission's term in office is expiring but there is a need to extend its work. Here is, for example, what an investigation of the activity of KGB bodies has shown. Following the results of an official investigation, 32 people were to have been brought to account.

[Begin Ponomarev recording] An analysis of the current situation has shown that of the 32 KGB leaders due to be dismissed by the commission for official investigation in connection with the their active participation in the August coup and their support for it, one person was dismissed as not suitable for his post, six persons were retired, and 25 persons continue service in leading posts within state security bodies; of them six persons have taken leading posts within the Russian Federal Security Agency and, what is especially interesting, one person has been promoted. The person who has been promoted is Major General Bulygin, who has been appointed chief of Main Directorate in military counterespionnage which controls the Armed Forces, internal troops and border troops. [end recording]

[Ruvinskiy] Deputy Aleskey Surkov reported on the militia's activity during the putsch. There also are facts here showing when leaders who supported the State Committe for the State of Emergency [SCSE] were later appointed to major leading posts within the Union Interior Ministry. The investigation has shown serious financial irregularities in the CPSU's activity, something which made it possible for the party elite to live a comfortable life. There is a tendency now, however, to curtail such an investigation. Deputy Viktor Sheynis spoke about the efforts of archive departments to close access to CPSU archives for researchers.

Father Gleb Yakunin, deputy and commission member, said that within the top church hierarchy, of every 10 clergymen at least nine had been KGB agents. The activity of the church was directly guided by the ideological department of the CPSU Central Committee. Relevant documents signed by Sklyarov and Brutens, staffers of that department, were shown at the news conference. From the educational establishments of the Zagorsk Academy, KGB agents were sent to study in Rome. The church was used for counterespionnage activities. In the Army, too, commanders who supported the SCSE are still holding high-level posts and are being promoted. This was announced by Deputy Lyushenkov. But a statement by Kichikhin, commission expert, became the most sensational one, perhaps. It was the issue of sending documents to the procuracy for instituting criminal proceedings against Zhirinovskiy, and not only because he supported the SCSE on 19 August. Checks have shown that his party does not exist as such, it numbers 500-600 people. The lists of party members submitted for registration had been falsified. Zhirinovskiy made illegal use of the means for holding his presidential election campaign. Serious violations were committed in that case by Kazakov, chairman of the Central Election Commission, and other officials.

Officials Examine New Law on Security

LD2412160991 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Interview with S.V. Stepashin, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and Security, and N.N. Kuznetsov, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Subcommittee on State Security, on the new RSFSR security law, by Igor Zbronzhko, RSFSR people's deputy; from the "Parliamentary Herald" program—live or recorded]

[Text] [Zbronzhko] Good evening. Our state, the Russian Federation, and the other members of the former Union are experiencing an extremely grave economic and political crisis. Interethnic and interregional ties are snapping. At such times the citizens of our republic, like the citizens of other states of the Commonwealth, cannot of course feel at ease, cannot feel confident of their security. In this connection the RSFSR Supreme Soviet has taken the first step—not the only one, perhaps—toward protecting our citizens by adopting a law on the security of the RSFSR. I would like to ask the people who actually drafted this law to talk about it in more detail.

[Stepashin] Well, we can probably only speak of ourselves in relative terms as the persons directly responsible for drafting the law. A very large group of experts, leading specialists and academics in the Russian Federation took part in the preparation of the law. The state commission preparing the conceptual outline of the Security Council, which was set up by presidential decree, was also involved at the final stage. A large group of experts, headed by academician Ryzhov, took part in the preparation of the law. As you know, he is one of the greatest specialists on national security, not just in the former Soviet Union but in the world as a whole. Therefore, this is a very substantial collective work prepared by those people whom I have mentioned. The preparation for it has taken several years.

Let me say just a few words about its background. The first attempt to adopt a concept of security and a law on security was made several years ago in the Soviet Union. But, unfortunately, neither the old Union Supreme Soviet nor the one which has now been dissolved ever got around to passing it. Various quasi-legal enactments were adopted. There was the now notorious law on KGB organs which, basically, created the legal groundwork for the putsch and the August events. The real reason for the legislative mish- mash served up by the Union Supreme Soviet was the lack of an overall concept, overall understanding of what security is, what it is based on, the fact that it should center first and foremost on the individual.

Therefore, we approached things in a slightly different way, one which is quite complex. This, by the way, was shown by today's discussion of the law in the Soviet of the Republic. We tried to draw up a conceptual document setting out a legal basis—this is the law on security.

[Zbronzhko] Let's have some more details. How will the citizens of the Russian Federation be protected by this law? How will it differ from all the quasi-legal enactments which went before? We have already begun to say something about that.

[Kuznetsov] First of all, I would like to warn all viewers and listeners that the security we are talking about is not state security. One complication in the past was the fact that when deputies, among others, sat down to discuss security, they always returned in the end to state security. We regard security as a very broad concept. We regard it as being a condition in which vitally important interests of the individual, society and the state are protected against real or expected threats. This innovation being introduced by the law makes it possible to look at security from a new and completely different point of view, one which is widely espoused abroad. In this way we are trying to integrate ourselves in the worldwide system of security.

The same concept also makes it possible to take a fresh look at citizen's security. In our law the citizen or individual is regarded as the basic...

[Zbronzhko interrupts] ...target.

[Kuznetsov] Yes, target—target for protection. This is provided in all areas, beginning with state security and ending with that it is a constitutional law, one which has constitutional force. Fundamental principles are introduced in it. We are trying to raise the concept of security to a level at which it will permeate everything and become the basis for all state policy in our country. This was never possible in the past because the public was not aware of this relationship. It did exist before. But a planning system which suppressed all initiative, overcentralization, the party's monopoly of power and so on blinded us to the problem, although it was tackled long ago in other countries.

The switch to the market is now forcing the public, in general, and legislators, in particular, to face up to this problem. We are trying to fine tune social relationships which arise in connection with the safeguarding of security as a whole.

[Zbronzhko] Nikolay Nikolayevich and Sergey Vladimirovich, let's explain to our viewers and citizens what bodies of power and administration will protect and guard their interests. What will be the fundamental difference between them and what already exists?

[Stepashin] Well, I wish to point out straightaway that in this law we are not regulating the actual structures of executive authority. Our law is solely concerned with security problems.

[Zbronzhko] Nevertheless the Security Council...

[Stepashin, interrupting] I am coming to that. At the end of our law we have proposed a whole list of legislative enactments which should follow if this law is adopted by the entire parliament. It has already been adopted in the first reading by the Soviet of the Republic. If this law is adopted, it will be followed by a whole package of very important laws which stem from the general concept of security. These include laws on federal security bodies, [word indistinct] and (?investigative) activities and commercial security. There will be about 45 very important laws. These will regulate the activities of executive bodies, including law enforcement agencies, and the system of personal guarantees. The individual must know how he is protected. He must know the nature of the regulatory documents which are supposed to protect him. All civilized states have such a law.

As far as this law is concerned, it is, I think, not only a theoretical document, not merely one which sets out a general approach. It also includes a practical section which has been drawn up quite carefully. This is the section dealing with the Security Council. I consider it to be very important. You know that at the second congress we adopted a decision on the establishment of a Security

Council attached to the president's office. This principle has been incorporated in the present RSFSR Constitution as an amendment. Unfortunately, the body has not yet been set up. As we can all see today—the notorious events surrounding Chechen-Ingushetia, including the imposition of a state of emergency, are an obvious example—our government's present lack of access to serious political, military, strategic and [word indistinct] forecasting indicates that the establishment of such a body is badly needed. Therefore, this law will set out regulations for the Security Council which needs to be created. It sets out...

[Zbronzhko, interrupting] ...headed by the president.

[Stepashin] Unquestionably. It will define its functions, aims, and objectives. This does not mean that we are setting up some kind of new body which is over and above the government or the Supreme Soviet. No. This is a body which will coordinate and draft political decisions, which will draw up strategy and plan the development of our entire republic, in the economic, political and military-strategic fields, and as regards the protection of human rights.

[Zbronzhko] Of course, the Federal Security Agency, the body which used to be called the KGB, will continue to be responsible for the questions which it deals with now, will it not? So too will all the other new bodies, the Russian Guard and...what are the others?

[Kuznetsov] Well, it is really the job of the government to go into this. The point is that the Security Council will coordinate all activities connected with the safeguarding of security. This is the pivotal problem which we spoke about. All the others will have their role, beginning, of course, with the Federal Security Agency and the RSFSR Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD], and ending with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Security and others—because this problem permeates all these spheres.

[Stepashin] There is another point I would like to mention. Lately there have been some quite distinct warnings and, if you like, criticisms that the newly created Federal Security Agency is an unconstitutional body, that it is not regulated by any law since it was set up by presidential decree, as were the regulations governing it. Therefore, now that our law has been drafted, very active preparations are under way for a law on Federal Security organs. We will submit it to the Supreme Soviet in mid-January.

There is one other thing I would like to add. I hope that the adoption of this law will help eliminate the legal vacuum which exists in our republic. Various attempts are being made...

[Zbronzhko, interrupting] ...Not only our republic.

[Stepashin] Not only ours—various attempts are being made to merge the MVD with the former KGB, thereby creating the kind of minotaur which we had in the 1930s, attempts to eliminate the procuracy and so on. All this must be regulated, first and foremost, by the law, by the Constitution. Unquestionably it must be under tight and proper control by our republic's Supreme Soviet.

[Zbronzhko] That is clear. But our citizens are worried about their security. Already they experience certain inconveniences when they go out of an evening. They fear for the lives of their children and so on. With the appearance of this law can we make them feel slightly more at ease, or is that not possible?

[Kuznetsov] Unfortunately, one has to state bluntly here that this law is one of a constitutional nature. It will not have any direct impact on the maintenance of public order in residential precincts. You have to understand that we are setting out the fundamental principles. These will be further developed with the adoption of the laws I mentioned and by the actions which executive structures take in due course. But we are now at the pinnacle of a pyramid which will broaden in due course and take in not only public and private security, in residential precincts and on the streets, but also encompass ecological security, information security—the whole range of areas covered by these laws.

[Zbronzhko] Nevertheless, let me digress from this law a bit. I know it is not entirely the province of your committee, nevertheless I would like to know what funds will be set aside for the strengthening of internal affairs bodies, state security, the bodies responsible for the economy and so on. One would just like to reassure people in some way.

[Stepashin] The funding question has already been settled, in principle. President Yeltsin issued a decree on the drive against organized crime and corruption just two weeks ago, giving law enforcement bodies very substantial increases, especially pay increases. Staff of law enforcement agencies, the militia, the procuracy, investigative bodies, and the Federal Security Agency [FSA] will receive very substantial material support beginning in January, because this really is a problem today. Many decent and honest people are leaving these bodies. You can add to this the creation of a legal framework and the elimination of the legal vacuum which I mentioned. I think this will make it possible for staff of law enforcement organs to guarantee citizens' security to some extent—I add that qualification, to some extent—and to eliminate the very serious situation that has developed in the country regarding crime and protection of individual and citizens' rights.

[Zbronzhko] Will there be any new divisions within the FSA responsible for the economy, politics, and things of that sort which maybe did not exist before?

[Kuznetsov] Yes, new departments are being set up there. The FSA's structure will probably undergo some change soon. We will ensure that these changes conform to the changing situation and to the Commonwealth agreement signing. There will be many innovations here, but it is a question of time. I think it will produce certain results, and our citizens will see that the FSA is not a direct successor to the KGB.

[Zbronzhko] The abbreviation even sounds a bit like another one—FBI.

[Kuznetsov] We have tried...[changes thought] We are embodying positive foreign experience in our work, not only that of the FBI but also that of other countries. Practice will show how successfully we manage to adapt this to local conditions.

[Zbronzhko] Let us return to our law. Let's remind our viewers again that the law is aimed, first and foremost, at protecting every individual citizen. As a specialist, can you tell us whether there has been anything like this before in our state's history?

[Stepashin] This is the first law of its kind in Russia. The same is true, to an even greater extent, of what we used to call the USSR. This document is quite new, not only in the legal sense but also in the intellectual, economic, and human dimensions. It is the first law of its kind, which is probably why its passage is proving so difficult. Unfortunately, our experiences over the 74 years since 1917—and the years before that, if we are frank—have had an impact. There was basically a legal vacuum. This was a state in which the application of the law was sometimes influenced by personal considerations and transient situations. The true implications of what was happening and the threat that we faced were not considered. This situation has led us to today's extremely grave situation. This is the first law to create a legal foundation. These laws exist in other states, including the United States. It has a national security law. Admittedly, the Americans also took a long time to adopt their law. It was only adopted after World War II, when they became aware of the situation in which the country found itself. This is the first substantial, basic law in our state's history. Let's hope that at long last our citizens and the law enforcement agencies which are dutybound to protect them will absorb this point rather than pick out similarities with what we've gotten used to, including our former KGB service. People must know what sort of state they are living in, what laws regulate their rights as individuals, and how they can be protected against threats, including ones from law enforcement agencies, if such a situation arises. That is on what we based this law.

[Kuznetsov] Maybe we should give the viewers a few more details. How will the individual be protected? The idea is to protect the vitally important interests of the individual against threats. That is the purpose of the security system which we intend to introduce with this law. A system of safeguarding security will single out the most crucial interests of society, the individual, and the state; predict and forecast threats; and arrange to protect those interests against those threats.

Federation Affairs

Yeltsin Interview With CNN Reported

LD2512162991 Moscow TASS in English 1610 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 25 TASS—Boris Yeltsin will receive the "nuclear briefcase" from Mikhail Gorbachev at 19.20 hours Moscow time on Wednesday [25 December], the Russian president said today in a live CNN interview, monitored in Moscow.

The parliaments of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and the Ukraine, where nuclear weapons of the former USSR are now deployed, will ratify the Soviet-American START treaty simultaneously, on the same day, Boris Yeltsin said. The leaders of the four states reached a corresponding agreement in Alma-Ata on December 21, he explained.

It is common knowledge that the USSR Supreme Soviet was unable, due to the political situation in the Soviet Union, to ratify this Soviet-American treaty, signed earlier this year by Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush.

The Soviet president is living through the most difficult day of his life, Boris Yeltsin said.

He declined to comment on Gorbachev's mistakes which force him to resign. "I respect Mikhail Gorbachev and would not like to speak about the past today", Yeltsin said.

He disclosed that the date of Gorbachev's resignation was agreed after the Alma-Ata meeting at which 11 republics joined the Commonwealth. Gorbachev first mentioned his intention to resign after Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine initiated the new Commonwealth in Minsk, Yeltsin said. "But I think he should not have resigned before today", he added.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin wants more support for his reforms on the part of his vice-president. Aleksandr Rutskoy lacks experience as a political leader and has not yet determined his role in the Russian leadership, Yeltsin said, adding that there is much time in store for Rutskoy.

Rutskoy said he disagrees with Yeltsin's reform plan and threatened resignation during his recent trip to Siberia. Later he stated he would not be a puppet in anyone's hands, a clear reference to the Russian president.

In his 30-minute interview Yeltsin also dwelt on political and economic developments in the new Commonwealth of Independent States after the Alma-Ata meeting.

The Russian president wished the world community Merry Christmas.

Yeltsin Spokesman on Gorbachev Future

LD2512191391 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1739 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] December 25 at 1830 the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev was to hand over the control over the so called nuclear button to the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin this has been reported by the press secretary of the President of Russia Pavel Voschanov. The ceremony of signing of an appropriate document was to be held in Gorbachev's Kremlin office. We have not got it confirmed by other sources as yet.

As the press secretary of the RSFSR president reported, the ex- president of the USSR will head the charity Gorbachev found.

Under an edict of the RSFSR president Gorbachev's Moscow state- owned apartment shall be privatized (which has not been provided for his state-owned dacha—summer-house). Gorbachev will go on drawing his current salary which will be indexed after the freeing of prices. It is not planned to invite Gorbachev to Minsk heads of states' meeting on December 30. December 29 the apparatus of the ex-USSR president shall cease to exist.

December 26 it is expected that the president of Russia will meet the Mayor of Moscow Gavriil Popov.

Yeltsin Skips Meeting With Gorbachev

OW2612002991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] As IF [INTERFAX] learned, despite an agreement reached beforehand, Russian President Boris Yeltsin did not come to meet Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin Wednesday [25 December]. According to unconfirmed reports, Mr. Yeltsin offered Mr. Gorbachev to meet in some other place.

Nuclear Controls Handed to Shaposhnikov

LD2512214391 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" program]

[Text] President Yeltsin told the Russian parliament today that Gorbachev would hand the nuclear controls to the Russian president today. We have just received a report that because the meeting between Gorbachev and Yeltsin that had been set for today was postponed, the nuclear controls have been handed to Marshal Shaposhnikov.

Yeltsin To Strengthen Control Over Arms Trade

OW2612113891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1500 GMT 24 Dec 92

[Transmitted via KYODO

[Text] The Russian leadership intends to strengthen control over arms trade, Mikhail Bazhanov, chairman of the state committee for conversion under Russia's President, told IF's [INTERFAX] correspondent. The relevant draft decree has already been submitted to Boris Yeltsin. Under the draft Russia's President will have the say in taking decisions on selling arms to one country or another.

A department for control over military equipment is being formed in the framework of the state committee for conversion. It will decide what weapons and in what shape can be sold abroad, said Bazhanov. Russia's foreign ministry will give recommendations as to the possibility of selling arms to one country or another, while its foreign trade committee will provide economic substantiations for proposed transactions.

These recommendations and substantiations will be considered by a special commission which will include high ranking Russian officials whose conclusions will be submitted to Russia's President.

Arms trade is the most profitable of all legal businesses. As for Russia, considering the critical state of its economy, it's a major source of foreign currency. Russia can offer a lot in this area. Its combat planes are among the world's best. Other types of weapons made in Russia are also in demand.

There is nothing wrong with the fact that we sell arms, said Mikhail Bazhanov. If Russia stops selling arms, in the arms market it will be replaced by its competitors.

Nevertheless it's inadmissible to allow weapons made in Russia to be used for the purpose of aggression. The Russian government's stand on this issue is strict. We'll be extremely selective when choosing our clients, said Mikhail Bazhanov, chairman of the committee for conversion under Russia's President.

Official on Reliability of 'Nuclear Button'

LD2612002391 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Wherever the country's president may be, he is always followed by a man holding a briefcase, a briefcase about which many people speak and know. Since the Soviet Union began to break up into independent states, the question of who in this country has his finger on the nuclear button has been raised in the media throughout the world. We have asked a further question: Who ensures that the button functions flawlessly and reliably from the technical point of view? Who is responsible for ensuring that missiles are not launched without the proper command?

[Begin recording] [N. Andreyev, chief of the Main Adminstration for Security of Communications (Nachalnik Glavnogo Upravleniya Bezopasnosti Svyazi)] We check literally every possible point, so to speak, from which there could come some sort of unauthorized go-ahead for a launch, and we provide guarantees that this could not occur. [end recording]

This evening, in accordance with accords that have been reached and following the statement by Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the former Soviet Union, a briefcase like this will pass into the hands of Boris Yeltsin.

Spending on Army To Increase Fivefold

OW2112222091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1822 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Even though Russia's next year's defence budget is to be cut by nearly one half, its spending on the army will increase almost fivefold and reach 500 to 600 billion roubles, IF's [INTERFAX] correspondent was told by Aleksandr Pochinok, chairman of the budget commission of Russia's parliament.

Most of the allocations for the army will be spent on social programs, on housing construction, on servicemen's wages and on conversion programs. "We'll have to stop defence plants but continue to pay the average wages to their staff", A. Pochinok pointed out. "If other republics agree to help Russia shoulder this burden, its share will make up 300 billions, and if they don't, Russia will have to pay for everything itself", he said.

Rutskoy Comments on Defense Industry Conversion

LD2312154191 Moscow TASS in English 1509 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 23 TASS—Russian Vice President Alexandr Rutskoy believes military industry can be successfully converted to consumer goods production if the enterprises are given a free hand in deciding on their future form of property, partnership and the list of goods to be produced. The state should regulate their activity only by economic means, Rutskoy said in an interview with the ECONOMY AND LIFE weekly, published today.

Rutskoy said the mistakes of former Soviet ministeries responsible for conversion should not be repeated in 1992.

Over 460 military enterprises and about 200 research institutes in Russia started switching to the production of consumer goods this year, the weekly said. The output of armaments considerably decreased this year compared to 1988, "the preconversion year", the weekly added without giving figures.

Interior Ministry Destroys Files on Officials

LD2612133191 Moscow TASS in English 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Sergey Oleynik]

[Text] Moscow December 25 TASS—The newly created Russian Interior Ministry began its activities by destroying files on corrupted senior police officers, Russian presidential sources told TASS on Wednesday [25 December]. The next to be eliminated are the dossiers on corrupted statesmen and political leaders, they said.

The new ministry was instituted by Russian President Boris Yeltsin by merging KGB and police. The KGB had a special anti- corruption department surveiling police. The sources said the ministry is now destroying the KGB files on corrupted police officers, but added the ministry's employees might be acting on their own initiative without any approval from the top.

A request of the Russian presidential office to receive the 1934 documents on merging the then Cheka-KGB with police was denied by the ministry. (The 1934 merging initiated Stalinist repressions.) Former deputy KGB chief refused to give the documents "as they are strictly confidential," the sources said.

The Russian Federal Security Agency sources confirmed to TASS that files discrediting senior police officers are being destroyed, while ordinary policemen will be sued for corruption.

Interior Ministry Not To 'Become a Monster'

LD2412214891 Moscow TASS in English 1925 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 24 TASS—A new Russian Interior Ministry, instituted by President Boris Yeltsin by merging the KGB and police, will not become a monster of Stalinist repression, two generals said at a press conference on Tuesday [24 December].

Democratic reforms and parliamentary control will prevent the new ministry from developing into the notorious secret police, the main instrument of Stalin's repressions, Viktor Yerin and Anatoliy Oleynikov, who head the commission supervising the formation of the ministry, told reporters.

The generals said finances saved by joining the ministries will be allocated to fight the paramounting [as received] crime wave.

All interior troops deployed in Russia are now under republican jurisdiction, the generals said. Troops are being withdrawn from Nagorno-Karabakh as there is no legal basis for their presence in the region of Azeri-Armenian conflict, they added.

Defense Official Opposes Security Merger

LD2612115391 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1000 GMT 26 Dec 91

[From the "Television News Service" Program]

[Text] The decree by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on merging the Internal Affairs Ministry [MVD] with the Federal Security Agency [FSA] into one ministry has been given an unequivocal evaluation. Commenting on this decree, the Secretary of the Supreme Soviet Committee [sentence unfinished as interview with V.Shuykov, secretary of the Russian Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and Security, captioned, begins]

[Begin recording] [Shuykov] What are the negative aspects? To begin with, the whole of world experience demonstrates that the special services should be, let us say, nonintegrated. If they are autonomous and independent, then there remains the possibility of, let us put it this way, somehow checking up on each other. That is the first thing.

Second, we have been saying today that he who has the information, in principle, is the leader. But in this situation, when everything is to be in one ministry, in effect the flow of information will come via only one channel; it will pass through one pair of hands. Again, this is always dangerous.

The next point, I would say, is that in principle there is a psychological incompatibility between the personnel today of the FSA and the MVD.

[Unidentified interviewer] What is your view of the appearance of this document?

[Shuykov] A week ago both chambers examined and adopted in its first reading the law on security in the RSFSR. This law on security was submitted with an accompanying note from President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, who requested that we adopt this law on security. It was written there in black and white that we have independent structures of the MVD and the AFB in our country. Literally a day after this law was passed in its first reading at the president's request, this decree comes out.

In my view the appearance of this decree was rather hasty and unconsidered. [end recording]

Minister Comments on Honecker, Ministry Merger

LD2512173491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1158 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—The Russian government's decision on throwing Erich Honecker out of the country has not been fulfilled, unfortunately, because the problem has been politically and legally transferred into the sphere of German-Chilean relations, Russian Justice Minister Nikolay Fedorov said today.

Speaking at a news conference he noted that, having respect for international law, the Russian government cannot undertake anything as long as Honecker is staying at the Chilean Embassy, that is, on the Chilean state's territory. According to Fedorov, a dead-end situation has taken shape since "this problem cannot be resolved by force, and now it is up to the German and Chilean sides to sort it out".

Answering a question about his attitude to the merger of the Interior Ministry and intelligence into a single ministry, the minister stressed that, as a lawyer, he regards this step as fraught with the most grave consequences. According to him, the creation of such a ministry is not expedient when the country is facing the task of building civil society.

Union Flag Lowered, Russian Banner Raised

LD2512230491 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The USSR state flag has been lowered over the Moscow Kremlin, and Russia's banner has been raised.

Union International Agreements To Be Viewed

OW2512185291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1730 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] A special commission formed by the Russian government Tuesday [24 December] will be working out procedures, conditions and mechanism of the Russian Federation's participation in international treaties and agreements signed by the former Soviet Union. The commission is led by Deputy Chairman of the Russian government Sergey Shakhray. Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev has been appointed the commission's deputy chairman.

Russian ministries have been charged with studying all international treaties and agreements of the former Union and considering the possibility of Russia's succeeding of its international obligations by January 1st, 1992.

The commission is due to present its proposals to the government by January 15th

Government Price Liberalization Resolution

LD2412145391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 2231 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Government of the RSFSR

Resolution of 19 December 1991 No. 55

City of Moscow on Measures for the Liberalization of Prices

In execution of the RSFSR president's decree of 3 December 1991 No. 297 "On Measures for the Liberalization of Prices", the Government of the RSFSR resolves:

1. Enterprises and organizations, and other juridical persons located on the territory of the RSFSR, irrespective of their subordination and forms of ownership, are from 2 January 1992 to apply free (market) prices and rates, formed under the influence of supply and demand, to all production and technical output, consumer goods, jobs and services, apart from those provided for in appendices Nos. 1 and 2 to the RSFSR president's decree of 3 December 1991 No. 297 "On measures for the Liberalization of Prices".

State purchases of agricultural output are made at free (market) prices.

2. To confirm maximum coefficients for increasing prices and rates for production and technical output and the main consumer goods and services of major social significance for which state regulation of prices and rates has been stipulated under appendices Nos. 1 and 2.

3. The RSFSR Ministry of the Economy and Finance is, in coordination with interested ministries and departments of the RSFSR:

to provide in essential cases within confirmed budgets for subsidies for milk, fermented milk, fat-free cottage cheese, the main varieties of children's foods including food concentrates, fuel sold to the population, medicines, medical items, technical equipment for the treatment of disability and for the rehabilitation of the disabled, transportation services and certain other socially important goods and services to which state regulated prices and rates are applied, and also to determine the procedure for subsidizing these goods and services from the budgets;

to establish in accordance with the submission of the Ministry of Fuel and Power Engineering of the RSFSR tariffs for pipeline transportation, and the procedure for their application;

to establish in accordance with the submission of the Ministry of Ecology and Use of Natural Resources of the RSFSR tariffs for timber being sold as a standing crop [otpuskayemaya na kornyu];

to determine procedures for fixing prices and tariffs for output and services destined for production and technical purposes, and for consumer goods envisaged in appendices 1 and 2 to the present resolution.

4. To give the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR the right to change as and when necessary the schedule and level of prices and tariffs for output for production and technical purposes, transportation services and consumer goods and services being sold at state controlled prices and tariffs and also the proportion of output released for free sale.

5. For purposes of ensuring normal self-financing conditions for enterprises in the fuel and power and metallurgical complexes and the timber procurement industry and transportation:

The Ministry of Industry of the RSFSR, the Ministry of Fuel and Power Engineering of the RSFSR, and the Ministry of Transportation of the RSFSR in coordination with the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR are to form extra-budgetary financial regulation funds for the industries referred to within the limits of their financial resources (including subsidies for the coal industry);

the ministries and departments of the RSFSR, in coordination with the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR, are to establish procedures for the formation and use of these extra- budgetary funds in the industries referred to;

the Ministry of Industry of the RSFSR is to preserve in the iron ore industry the existing system of polar rent payments that remove the influence of various mining-climatic and natural climatic conditions upon the results of the work of enterprises in the industry;

the Ministry of Fuel and Power Engineering of the RSFSR, in coordination with the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR, is to establish settlement prices for coal taking into consideration the rates of subsidies and rent payments, and also to present to the RSFSR Government proposals for regulating prices for output of the fuel and power complex;

the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR in accordance with a submission from the Ministry of Ecology and Use of Natural Resources of the RSFSR is to establish rates of deductions for geological prospecting works.

6. To keep for the first quarter of 1992 existing amounts of trade discounts for consumer goods envisaged in appendix 2 to the present resolution, with the exception of bread.

The RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance, by agreement with the RSFSR Ministry of Trade and Material Resources, is to establish the size of the trading discount for types of bread to which state regulated retail prices apply.

7. The RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance is, by agreement with interested RSFSR ministries and departments, and jointly with the RSFSR State Committee on Anti- Monopoly Policy and Support of New Economic Structures and the state statistical bodies, to elaborate and implement in 1992 provisions for a mechanism for price regulation for products of monopoly enterprises;

is to confirm and implement interim provisions for a procedure to apply free (market) prices to products for production and technical purposes, to consumer goods and to services.

8. Governments of republics which are part of the RSFSR and executive authorities of krays, oblasts and autonomous formations and of the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are granted the right:

to reduce, in the case of necessity, the established ceiling prices and tariffs for basic food products and services, using funds from local budgets, and also to vary the range of consumer goods and services (within the limitations of the list envisaged in appendix 2 of this resolution) to which state regulation of prices and tariffs is applied;

to establish and regulate:

the ceiling for trade mark-up on free production (wholesale) prices for consumer goods (products for production and technical purposes) marketed to the population in the regions, taking into account expenses for the transportation and marketing thereof;

tariffs for conveying of passengers and luggage by motor transportation (execpt inter-town and inter-oblast routes) and taxis, and also by municipal and suburban elecrified transportation, including the subway;

tariffs for conveyance of goods by motor transportation to the population and the services accompanying this;

deposits on glass containers.

9. The governments of republics which are part of the RSFSR and the executive authorities of krays, oblasts and autonomous formations and of the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are, in case of necessity, to regulate, using the funds of local budgets:

surcharges on products from public catering enterprises (in schools, student and workers canteens and others);

tariffs for the most important communal, household and other services.

10. The RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance, the governments of the republics within the RSFSR and the bodies of executive power in the krays, oblasts, autonomous entities and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are to guarantee that instructive materials connected with the introduction of the new procedure for the setting of prices reach the relevant ministries, departments and organizations.

11. The RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance, the RSFSR State Taxation Service, the RSFSR State Committee for Anti-Monopoly Policy and the Support of the New Economic Structures, the governments of the republics within the RSFSR and the bodies of executive power in the krays, oblasts, autonomous entities and in the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg are to strengthen their monitoring of the observation of state discipline on prices for consumer goods, producer goods and services.

They are to establish that if the procedure for the application of free (market) prices as well as of state regulated prices and tarifs on producer goods, consumer goods and services is violated by enterprises and organizations, irrespective of their form of ownership, the surplus profit received should indisputably be transferred (withdrawn) as budget income. A fine of the same order is to be additionally exacted from the enterprise or organization.

The RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance is to elaborate and confirm the procedure for applying economic sanctions for the violation of state discipline on prices, taking into account the anti-monopoly legislation, and it should convey it to the relevant enterprises and organizations.

12. It should be established that all trade, public catering, supply and distribution and trade purchasing enterprises (irrespective of their form of ownership) are to be registered in accordance with a procedure determined by the RSFSR Ministry of Economics and Finance and should present, in accordance with the current rules, data on the extent of the trade and supply and distribution mark-ups applied and the commission dues received by them to the bodies of the RSFSR State Taxation Service. [signed] First Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Government G. Burbulis

Appendix No. 1

To Decision No. 55 of the RSFSR Government, dated 19 December 1991

Maximum parameters for raising state prices and rates for manufacturing and technical products and services

	Maximum coefficients without value-added tax for effective prices of industry and rates
Coal: power	5
coking	8
Petroleum, petroleum gas	5 (Footnote 1)
Gas condensate	5
Natural gas, including liquefied, broad fraction of light hydro- carbons	5
Motor and boiler fuel, kerosene	4.8 (Footnote 2)
Shales	5.5
Electric power (Footnote 3)	4

Maximum parameters for raising state prices and rates for manufacturing and technical products and services (Continued)

	Maximum coefficients without value-added tax for effective prices of industry and rates
Including for agricultural consumers	Max. rate 8 kopecks per kW/h
Thermal power (Footnote 3)	4
Precious metals and alloys, scrap and waste from them, raw diamonds, precious, semi-precious, synthetic and artificial stones and manufactures from them are fixed by decision of the RSFSR Government	
Freight transport rates and services: rail freight transportation (including local transportation and as small consignments via through connection), loading and offloading work (Footnote 4)	
conveyance of cargo by maritime transport, excepting conveyance in overseas shipping operations; loading and unloading work and port services; the escorting of ships by ice-breakers	5 (Footnote 4)
conveyance of cargo by air (Footnote 4)	5
conveyance of cargo by river transport (excepting conveyance in overseas shipping operations)	3.5 (Footnote 4)
conveyance of cargo by road transportation	3.6
basic communications services on average	3 (Footnote 5)
Footnote 1. the coefficient is applied to existing prices of industry for oil, excluding the surcharge (14 rubles per tonne).	
Footnote 2. wholesale prices for specific types of output are envisaged in price list No. 04-02-1991	
Footnote 3. electrical and thermal energy produced by enterprises belonging to the former USSR Ministry of Power and Electrification and USSR Ministry of Nuclear Power Generation and the Nuclear Industry.	
Footnote 4. for all dispatchers (and recipients) of freight, including the population.	
Footnote 5. a specific list of communications services is being drawn up by the RSFSR Ministry of Communications in coordination with the Ministry of the Economy and Finances of the RSFSR.	

Appendix No.2

Maximum increases in prices and tariffs for the principal consumer goods (services) sold to the public

	Maximum tariffs and multiples of existing prices and tariffs (including value-added tax)
Certain types of bread (Footnote 1)	3
Milk, yoghurt, fat-free cottage cheese	3
Baby food, including food concentrates	3
Table salt	4
Sugar	3.5
Butter	3
Vodka and pure spirits	4.5
Matches	4
Medicines and medical products (Footnote 2)	on average 4
Technical equipment for treatment of disability and rehabilitation of the disabled (Footnote 3)	4
Gasoline	3
Diesel fuel	2.8
Kerosene for oil lamps	5
Fuel (coal, peat and coal briquettes, firewood, fuel for domestic stoves and others)	5
Liquefied gas	3
Mains gas	5
Electricity, for public and domestic needs:	
to rural residents	8 kopecks per kWh

Maximum increases in prices and tariffs for the principal consumer goods (services) sold to the public (Continued)

	Maximum tariffs and multiples of existing prices and tariffs (including value-added tax)
to urban residents (except buildings with built-in electric cooking and heating facilities)	12 kopecks per kWh
in urban populated centers (in houses equipped with fixed electric ovens and electrical heating installations)	8 kopecks per kWh
water supply and sewerage services on average	5
thermal energy for central heating and the supply of hot water on average	3
rents for apartments, including charges for hostel accommodation no change	
passenger transportation services:	
conveyance of passengers and luggage by rail	2
conveyance of passengers and luggage by maritime transportation, excepting conveyance in overseas shipping operations	2
Transportation of passengers and cargo by air	3
Transportation of passengers and cargo by river transportation, excluding transportation on urban and suburban waterways and crossings	2
Transportation of passengers and cargo by automobile transportation on interoblast (interrepublican within the RSFSR) routes	2
Communications services	average 3
1. specific types of bread are determined by the RSFSR Ministry of Economy and Finances in coordination with the interested ministries.	
2. specific lists of medicines and items used for medical purpose is determined by the RSFSR Ministry of Health in coordination with the RSFSR Ministry of Economy and Finances.	
3. specific lists of technical equipment for treatment and rehabilitation of disability are determined by the Coordinating Committee on Issues of Invalids under the RSFSR president in Coordination with the RSFSR Ministry of Economy and Finances.	

For attention of editorial offices

The figures and characters in oblique brackets in appendices 1 and 2 to the RSFSR Government resolution on prices should be written as degrees of power, that is, on the top right. [as received]

Central Bank's Debt to Citizens at 200 Million

LD2512201391 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The Central Bank of Russia's debt to Russia's citizens has reached 200 million rubles. This is what Ivan Romanov, deputy chairman of the Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, told the RIA correspondent. Many residents of Bashkiria, Novosibirsk, and Irkutsk Oblasts and a number of northern regions have not received pay for two to three months. Moscow students have not received stipends for two months. An exception was made only for Kuzbass miners who threatened with a strike. They were urgently paid 5 million rubles.

Burbulis Addresses Trade Union 2nd Plenum

OW2612022791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1730 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] First Vice-Premier of Russia Gennadiy Burbulis has expressed hope that a meeting in Minsk December 30th will resolve organizational and judicial questions of a new Commonwealth. Speaking at the 2nd Plenum of the Russian Independent Trade Unions Federation Council in Moscow Wednesday [25 December], he said that the Russian government believes radical economic reform can be carried out only within the framework of a new political structure possible only after the Minsk and Alma-Ata meetings.

"Time has come when the Russian government can be responsible for what it does," Mr. Burbulis noted.

Gennadiy Burbulis said liberalization of prices is inevitable. He spoke in favor of effective mechanism of privatization, in the first place, of manufacturing industries and small enterprises.

The plenum will discuss a draft general agreement for 1992 between the Russian government and the Russian Independent Trade Unions Federation Council and the social protection budget of Russia for 1992.

Democratic Reform Holds Founding Congress

OW2112035091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1804 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By "political scientist" B. Andreyev from "Nation and Society"; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The founding congress of the Movement for Democratic reforms [MDR], which held its closing session on Sunday December 15, was an outstanding political event not only for Russia but for practically all parts of the former Soviet Union.

Many of the observers and journalists who were present at the congress say it was a lot better than most of the previous congresses and conferences of democrats in terms of organisation, and in that its delegates represented wider social strata. The report of the mandate commission and sociological service of the congress, for example, cited the following figures: the delegates represented 30 political parties and 70 public organisations comprising more than 100,000 scientists, engineers, artists, doctors and teachers.

The support given to the movement by these strata, the composition of its membership, the statements setting out its programme and the structure of its regional organisations all make it obvious that the congress has given a clear-cut shape to what is a serious political power which may in the near future stand at the help of state. Some of its members are already in the government, whereas others have stable contacts with government bodies at every level. Part of the MDR is in opposition to the government, which gives the movement a number of tactical advantages owing to the instability in many regions of the country.

The policy the MDR intends to pursue towards the present government (a statement to the effect was read out at the congress) reflects this "dualism": the movement intends both to cooperate with the government and exercise a kind of control over it in order to keep it on the road towards greater democracy and market economics.

Now the political vacuum caused by the demise of the CPSU several months ago is at last being filled. It is now obvious that the populist democrats who rose to power owing to their condennation of the communist system, or simply to their demagoguery, and the apparatchiks who were quick to put on democratic disguise have proved incapable of offering any reasonable or practicable programmes.

Another serious problem is that the anticommunist forces which used to be in opposition but are now in power have yet a long way to go before they can be safely called democratic. Getting used to their new role as ruling forces is a fairly painful process for them.

Apart from this, there are intellectuals who have realised after several years of intoxication with freedom that they should form their own organisations because the nonprofessionals who have come to power aren't much good. In some of the former union republics, the moderate centrist forces were left in a minority and were defeated by radical nationalists in the power struggle, which made them see the need to make contacts with forces whose ideals they largely shared.

Fifteen per cent of delegates to the founding congress were registered as businessmen, which is very significant, because, as the Programme Statement emphasises, the MDR "is above all orientated towards the emergent market sectors of the economy and seeks to express the interests of business, mainly private property owners". It was only natural that such an open declaration of sympathy should have caused some response among businessmen, one of whom said at the congress that they would give the MDR financial as well as emotional support.

Thus the founders of the MDR took one of the most advantageous positions for the coming power struggle. That they do intend to take part in it is clear from the fact that many of the speakers a the congress were making references to a forthcoming election, for which, they said, each party had to submit lists of its candidates. Although all the parties and organisations comprising the MDR are completely independent, there were insistent calls for closer coordination and interaction between them and for the setting up of an information centre and analytical service.

As expected, much attention was paid at the congress to ethnic issues, which manifested itself both in complaints of some regional delegations about each other and in various interpretations of ethnic conflicts and suggestions on their resolution. It was emphasised that Moscow should be extremely careful in its statements on such issues, because "clumsy statements made in the Centre sometimes cause shocks in the provinces".

In connection with the Brest agreements, some delegates said the MDR could form a "basis for the practical implementation of the plan to create a community of independent states and could become its social reflection". All participants thought a dialogue was necessary between members of the former Soviet Union in one form or another and that it was not too early to look for efficient and civilised forms of cooperation.

Some of the speakers pointed out that unresolved ethnic conflicts in independent republics and states posed a serious threat to democracy in them. Events, they said, might develop in accordance with the following pattern: restrictions imposed on the rights of the non-native population might lead to its limited, if any, representation in bodies of power, which, in turn, might lead to the forming of illegal structure—which might result in the setting up of a secret political police, which, as experience proves, would never confine itself to the performance of the duties it had been charged with and would end up spying on legitimate organisations as well, and even on bodies of power. Simultaneously, extremist organisations might appear in neighbouring states to defend "our boys", which would naturally make matters even worse.

Some of the delegates thought there were only two possible ways to solve the problem before those states had legislation which met all the requirements of the

Human Rights Declaration: either the non-native population became involved in the life of the country on an equal basis, for which proper guarantees should be given, or civilised repatriation should be organised with the help of Russia, the European Community and public organisations.

There were protests against the wholesale condemnation by some of the present-day political leaders of everything achieved by the country for the past seventy-odd years. In this connection, one of the businessmen emphasised that it was absurd to "raze everything to the ground" and that there were some reasonable things which should be made use of, such as a stable system of direct economic ties and inter-regional cooperation. There were appeals to stop the disintegration processes and to oppose separatist sentiments.

The armed forces were one of the issues brought up. One of the delegates, a serviceman from Sevastopol, said they were one of the links connecting various parts of the former Soviet Union.

Some of the speakers, however, sounded distinctly nationalistic, claiming, in particular, that some delegates misinterpreted the state of affairs in their republics. A Ukrainian delegate insisted that his republic should have its own armed forces and said that having a single currency on the territory of the former Soviet Union had probably made sense in the past or might make sense in the future but certainly made no sense at present. There were other points made as well which contradicted the Brest agreements and might ultimately lead to serious conflicts within the MDR.

The seven co-chairmen of the movement (Aleksandr Yakovlev, Eduard Shevardnadze, Stanislav Shatalin, Anatoliy Sobchak, Gavriil Popov, Arkadiy Volskiy and Vyacheslav Shostakovskiy) were re-elected to their posts. One young delegate said that their high rating should be used in the interest of the movement, but at the same time he criticised them. All of them except for Mr Volskiy and Mr Sobchak were too old, he thought. He was not the only one to take this view. One newspaper, for instance, sarcastically described the seven leaders as a "new Politburo".

One interesting fact pointed out by journalists was the high popularity of Anatoliy Sobchak, Mayor of St. Petersburg, among delegates, especially among those from Central Asia. His speeches were remarkable for their consistent analysis of the democratisation process, one of the key problems in Soviet society today. His suggestion that defence of human rights be made the main task for the MDR was enthusiastically supported by the congress. Apart from everything else, this was in line with the stand taken by many foreign politicians for whom observance of human rights should be a necessary condition for obtaining Western humanitarian aid, a fact the congress was bound to take into account.

Arkadiy Volskiy was amazing for his ability to handle the audience, his calm sense of humour (an important trait for a politician and leader), his extensive contacts with delegation leaders and his patience with journalists, who pestered him with their questions. Remarkably, he was the only speaker at the first press conference on the results of the congress held at the Mayor's Office on December 16. Mr Volskiy has a rich experience of work in the apparat (he actually objects to the use of the word apparatchik as a distinctly negative epithet), but he takes a critical view of the past and is now ready to lead, or at first be one of the leaders of, a serious political party in this new, very specific, situation.

To sum up, it is clear that the ramified structure of the movement, its expected growth (according to what Mr Volskiy said at the press conference, the MDR will have several new collective members in the near future), its sufficient financial resources, its considerable intellectual potential and the rich political experience of its leaders all mean that the MDR is a power which is to be taken seriously and which will play an important part in the near future.

Democratic Reforms Movement Explains Precepts

PM2412145791 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 14 Dec 91 First Edition p 2

[Movement for Democratic Reforms answers ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA questionnaire under the rubric "Political Self-Portrait"]

[Text] 1. Name of movement, year in which it was founded, number of members.

The Movement for Democratic Reforms emerged in July 1991 and has some 1 million members, including social organizations, unions, associations, and parties which have joined the movement.

2. Why did your movement choose the name it has?

The movement was originally founded because of the political situation that existed at the time. The first appeal by the movement's leaders was like a warning before the August events. Now the arrangement of political forces in the country has changed in democracy's favor. But the movement's ideas have proved fruitful even in the new situation.

The movement's name reflects its basic tasks and objectives. But, first of all, why are we a movement, rather than a party, a front, a bloc, and so forth? We do not want to be restricted by a rigid party framework, membership cards, and other formal party conventions. We are open to everyone who sincerely wants to reform our society. The fact that practical reforms have not yet been implemented is the main reason why our lives are so difficult.

3. What is your ideal state system?

Our movement's aim is to build a civil society with strict demarcation of power: representative, executive, and judicial. It is also important to ensure that the mass media have independence and freedom of circulation. The mass media are the fourth estate of a democratic society. As far as ideals are concerned, our history has provided us with plenty of sad examples of the results of striving for and pursuing an ideal. We are realists. Common human values are important to us.

4. How does your movement differ from other parties in Russia?

Discussing the specific features of our movement, we would not want to begin by setting it apart from other democratic parties and movements. It would be more appropriate to talk about differences in emphasis.

The movement does not pretend to be the only true representative of democratic forces in the country. The dividing line runs outside the democratic camp. It would be more true to say that we lay the emphasis on a community of all democratic forces and their consolidation throughout the country. Another feature of the movement is that it extends to other republics.

5. In what regions of the Russian Federation does your movement have appreciable influence?

The movement's main regional center is in Moscow. Constituent conferences have been held in St. Petersburg, Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Nizhniy Novgorod, Tver, Stavropol, and a number of other cities and regions: Tataria, Karelia, Yakutia, Checheno-Ingushetia, Khabarovsk Kray, Krasnodar Kray, and Stavropol Kray. The movement is active in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Turkmenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. The movement's constituent congress will be held in Moscow on 14-15 December.

6. Which strata of the population can your movement count on for support?

First and foremost, we expect to find support among active, creative people who are professionals in their field. Professionalism is something we have been lacking and, it must be said, is still lacking in the new power now taking shape. We see a threat in the fact that our society is becoming increasingly crude and uneducated. So our criteria are professional- rather than class-oriented. We see no fundamental difference between a highly skilled worker, a teacher, an innovator, a hard-hitting journalist, and a peasant farmer.

7. Does your movement have real leaders?

The movement's founders—A. Volskiy, A. Petrakov, G. Popov, A. Rutskoy, A. Sobchak, I. Silayev, S. Shatalin, E. Shevardnadze, and A. Yakovlev—enjoy broad support in society. The movement's political council now has 33 members, including leaders of various parties, well-known economists, political scientists, sociologists, and cultural figures. These people are ready and able to assume political responsibility for the country's future.

8. Do your movement's leaders and activists have sufficient political sophistication? Do you need to have great erudition, a sense of humor, and a good imagination to work in politics?

The political sophistication and experience of these people are well known. Our leaders also have a good sense of humor. It would be hard for them to engage in meaningful political activity without it.

9. Are there shortcomings in your movement's activity? If so, what is the cause?

Of course there are shortcomings. We are all children of our country, our time, and our system. None of us have been left unaffected by the Soviet mentality, and this is the main shortcoming. Conferences, sessions, agreements, debates—we err in this direction as well, but we are gradually getting rid of our "birthmarks."

10. Do you foresee that your movement will grow in size and popularity over the next year?

We would not want to hazard a guess as to the exact number of members and supporters but we can see a fairly steady trend: More and more new people from various regions and republics contact us every day.

We can be contacted on the following number: 095-299-15-13.

The answers to our newspaper's questions were prepared by the Moscow Regional Center of the Movement for Democratic Reforms.

They were approved at a session of the Movement for Democratic Reforms Political Council.

From the editorial office: When preparing the completed questionnaires for publication, we could not help but notice that every political association had approached the matter in its own way. Some strictly followed the questions, others deliberately ignored them. Some gave dry, official answers, others could not refrain from poetical quotations. In short, we would like readers to pay attention to presentation as much as content, because presentation also says a great deal.

Deputy Alksnis Wants 'Iron Discipline'

AU2312102491 Budapest NEPSZAVA in Hungarian 18 Dec 91 p 3

[Telephone interview with Russian Parliament Deputy Viktor Alksnis, spokesman of the "Black Colonels," by reporter Szerdahelyi in Moscow; date not given: "Iron Discipline Instead of Dictatorship!"]

[Text] "Russian President Boris Yeltsin failed properly to reassure U.S. Secretary of State James Baker about the Army and its nuclear arsenal. However, it is not our major task to reassure the Americans; it is much more important for us to allay the doubts here at home"—Viktor Alksnis told NEPSZAVA in a telephone interview from Moscow.

[Szerdahelyi] What doubts do you have in mind, Mr Alksnis?

[Alksnis] The same doubts that made Baker come to Moscow. The United States and Western Europe are afraid of the possibility that the Russian nuclear arsenal might be left without supervision. No doubt, many people are alarmed at this prospect here too, but this is not the point. The essential thing is the role of the military in the event of a popular uprising. The Army is the most important factor in this country today, and neither Yeltsin nor anyone else can move without the Army!

[Szerdahelyi] Which army do you have in mind? Is the uniform central leadership still alive?

[Alksnis] Of course it is alive, despite the fact that some republics have also changed their policy in this respect. For example, earlier, Georgia would have done everything in its power to drive the Soviet troops out, and now the Georgians would like to force these soldiers to change uniforms. This is absolutely mad! In a way totally unknown to me, the Ukrainians are actually striving to set up their own army. However, none of this can hinder the strong and central Russian military leadership.

[Szerdahelyi] Would the soldiers also support a popular uprising?

[Alksnis] The Army already proved in August that it supported the people. The coup was organized against the people in August and thus is it clear that, now, we must protect the people's interests even more.

[Szerdahelyi] You do not see any real chance of a popular uprising, do you?

[Alksnis] One thing is certain: The people have run out of patience! If they see again that they are only being forced from one alliance into another, they will definitely act.

[Szerdahelyi] But this was a voluntary choice this time.

[Alksnis] Nonsense! The republics voted in favor of independence, and not in favor of creating another union.

[Szerdahelyi] This means that you are no longer in favor of maintaining the Soviet Union.

[Alksnis] In its old form and mainly with its old leaders, the Soviet Union has collapsed, and Mikhail Gorbachev bears the greatest responsibility for all this! I believe in a strong Russia that has mutually advantageous economic contacts with the other republics. However, Gorbachev does not fit in this picture in any way whatsoever. Nor does anyone who envisages a future without soldiers.

[Szerdahelyi] I understand from your words that you would not distance yourself from a dictatorial and military regime.

[Alksnis] I do not like the word "dictatorship." However, I like iron discipline and determination. Let the strong people come forward, people who can regain our country's honor! We will support these people!

[Szerdahelyi] Is Yeltsin such a man?

[Alksnis] Not yet, but he might become one!

Media

Yeltsin Addresses Press Editors 24 Dec

LD2612012691

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 2123 GMT on 25 December carries a 21-minute report on Russian President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin's address to Russian newspaper editors in Moscow on 24 December, including recorded highlights of Yeltsin's address.

An unidentified announcer opens the report over video of Yeltsin standing on a platform, flanked by Russian Federation Press Minister Poltoranin and others. The announcer says: "The Russian newspaper editors' conference lasted two days at the Staraya Ploshchad in Moscow. This was perhaps the first time they were meeting not to receive new instructions, but to decide vital problems of newspaper life. Russian President Boris Yeltsin addressed the editors on the second day of the conference. Not every journalist, especially journalists from town and district newspapers, has the opportunity to interview the Russian president, so the journalists were unanimous in deciding to hold a big news conference rather than a meeting with a traditional report. Therefore the text written in advance was put aside. Boris Yeltsin talked about the changes in the republic's life and about the basis for signing the Minsk and Alma-Ata agreements."

At 2125 GMT, Yeltsin says: "In one year as Russian Federation president I have traversed the Novo-Ogarevo process; have taken an active part in it; and indeed, sincerely wanted the Union treaty to succeed." As more difficulties arose and more republics declared independence—above all, when the Ukraine refused to sign the Union treaty—Yeltsin explains, "we then returned to an option that was discussed back in December of last year. We wanted four states to sign this sort of treaty in December last year without the center because we were all so sick of the center, we were all fighting shy of it to such a degree, you understand, and wanted to escape the center somehow or other. The situation moved so quickly that we just had to meet right away in Minsk." Yeltsin then outlines the Alma-Ata agreements on establishing a Commonwealth of Independent States, listing the provisions of the Minsk and Alma-Ata agreements on the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The announcer points out: "Naturally, the journalists also were interested in how Union President Mikhail Gorbachev reacted to the Alma-Ata agreements."

At 2128 GMT, Yeltsin says: "It must be said that the country's president reacted fairly irritably at first, but then, all the same, he realized that, generally, it is a process that inevitably had to come and occur, and that we cannot manage without it. Generally speaking, he said in our nine-hour conversation yesterday—the concluding, final discussion between the two presidents, of the USSR and Russia—that he would support it, as it were."

The announcer asks: "A total of 11 of the 15 former union republics joined the Commonwealth. What is the fate of the other four?"

Yeltsin says: "As for the Baltics, they reacted positively to the idea itself and supported it; they sent letters. However, they said that they would elaborate their common principle so that all three republics can think about how to approach it."

The announcer asks: "The conflict in Tbilisi flared up while the leaders of the 11 republics were holding their conference in Alma- Ata, and Boris Yeltsin clearly stated his view on Russian intervention in interethnic conflicts."

Yeltsin says: "In no circumstances will our Russian forces—the Army, the internal troops, or the Interior Ministry—participate in that process. In general, quite a lot of our Russian boys have perished in Nagorno-Karabakh, and it is simply impermissible for us to use the Army to settle ethnic conflicts." Yeltsin then summarizes provisions of the Alma-Ata agreements on forces to deal with instability in the republics.

The announcer notes that Yeltsin also discussed price liberalization, which takes effect 2 January. This is a matter of importance to newspapermen because the rise in the cost of newsprint could have an adverse effect many hitherto profitable publications, the announcer notes.

Yeltsin then makes it clear that paper—newsprint, in this case—will be among the goods for which price increases will be state- controlled, adding: "The cost of newsprint on the free market could rise roughly 10 times, not immediately, of course; initially by three, four, or five times, but a ten-fold increase cannot be ruled out. Thus, all the mass media publications—newspapers and magazines—would either become unprofitable or else you would have the price of newspapers being set at seven rubles or so! We cannot have that. Somehow we will find a solution to this question, even if it means the state allowing a quota for some publications. The Russian share of newspapers and magazines amounts to some 40 percent, so this 40 percent could be granted a quota; they would have a guaranteed supply in line with some state-regulated price."

The announcer says that Yeltsin then announced that all newspapers, including the old central newspapers, will be Russian.

Yeltsin declares: "There is not a single country that has gone over to a market-based economy without having price liberalization. This is our last chance; there is no other way for us. We simply must encourage people with the thought that the theoretical calculations indicate that prices will rise for around six months. By the fall or the end of 1992 we should see, if not a sharp drop in prices, then at least we should reach a plateau, a stabilization of prices, and subsequently a drop as the economy picks up."

On foreign aid, he notes the way almost all countries have rallied around: "It cannot be said that this is the main thing; the main thing is up to us. Of course, we should rely on our own efforts, above all. That goes without saying, although at this critical moment we cannot turn our backs on the aid." Yeltsin says that Italian, Japanese, and U.S. aid is largely to overhaul industry and agriculture.

At 2134 GMT, the announcer notes that the Russian and Union presidents met behind closed doors on 23 December.

Yeltsin then details the conversation: "I am not sure whether it will be in the media, but I can tell you that, as for his, so to speak, material provision, this was decided there, in Alma-Ata—a life pension amounting to today's salary, plus allowances which will be adopted by the Russian Federation legislation. It is not much, only 4,000 rubles. Next, a state dacha, but naturally not the one he occupies now because this is the president's dacha and has all the control units, military, and other things. It is of special destination, so to speak. So of course, he will move to a smaller, so to speak, rather ordinary one, but still it is not bad. He will leave the official residence on Kosygin Street. I will not move in there. I think we might give it to one of scientific figures. Next, cars: Either two Volga cars or a ZIL and a Volga. Medical service. Have I missed anything? Oh yes, bodyguards: He asked for too many. We divided by 10 and gave him 20 people. Beside bodyguards, there are servants and drivers. His immunity also was discussed, but we heads of states decided in the way that because there is no such thing in the legislation of any of the republics, we cannot make such an illegal decision."

Yeltsin then discusses price liberalization, saying: "Price liberalization will be introduced at the same time as privatization. Why did privatization not advance? Because it was not known who the owner was and who should sell, on the whole, you see. Therefore, this property was divided by levels. The top one is federal property, what belongs to Russia. These are major installations; several hundred millions worth of these are federal property. These can be auctioned or other forms of privatization can be applied only following a decision by the Russian Federation committee on property. Next is the kray, oblast, and republican level, their properties.

The next level is municipal, all that is connected with trade and consumer services—that is, connected directly with the life of an individual—this is municipal property. All amendments and laws have been passed. It is necessary to start this work immediately. All impediments have been lifted. What is more, we have adopted a law on liberalizing foreign economic activities and have practically put the foreign investor on par with our own entrepreneurs. We have cleared away the last remains of the economic iron curtain and have opened Russia's doors. Do please come and invest your capital. Some are calling this the sell-off of Russia. On the contrary, capital is being invested in modern technology and conversion."

The announcer points out that journalists regard the present republican press law being discussed by the Russian parliament as more reactionary than the union law. Asked whether anything can be done to improve it, Yeltsin says: "Indeed, so far the press law has been proceeding in an unsatisfactory way in the Supreme Soviet. It is turning out worse than the union law. We cannot permit this. We have not yet adopted a single law worse than the union laws. Supposing we suddenly adopt such a press law. In that case, I will have to put my right of veto into operation."

Yeltsin then answers a journalist on plans to write a book: "I must disappoint you. I have not written a single line of the book, not a single line, although I intend to do so. It is my duty as a person directly and closely involved in these events. I must write this book. It probably will be called "Three Days." So far, I have thought up its title."

At 2140 GMT, Yeltsin discusses the air services' future and whether it will be possible to preserve the former union civil aviation ministry, saying that there will be no return to the old centralized system. He adds that the administration of flights will remain unified, noting: "Of course, we are concerned over the fact that such a situation has come about in relation to machines and engines, especially on the Il-76 and Il-86. We now have concluded with a German firm an agreement on supplying us with engines for these aircraft of ours."

The announcer then says that the Russian Government also is assuming control over transportation operations on the republic's territory, and has prepared a whole package of decisions to normalize the work of aviation. He says: "The meeting took place on the eve of the New Year's holiday. How can we usher in the New Year holiday this year? Many people asked this question."

Yeltsin says: "First, the newspapers reported today that Yeltsin will be having champagne and black caviar. I would like to assure you that, in the first place, I have not seen any black caviar for ages. As for champagne, if I can get any, then...." Yeltsin's comments trail off into laughter.

At 2144 GMT, Yeltsin ends the news conference by noting that Russia and Belarus have reached agreement on supplies of extra spirits.

Cited on Gorbachev Meeting, Georgia

LD2412191291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1832 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 24 December (TASS)—The transfer of the nuclear weapons control panel from the president of the USSR to the president of Russia will take place immediately after Mikhail Gorbachev's television statement on his resignation. This was reported today by Boris Yeltsin, speaking at a meeting with the leaders of the Russian mass media.

Mikhail Gorbachev is expected to make his statement at 2100 Moscow time on 25 December.

Sharing his impressions of yesterday's meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, which continued for nearly eight hours, the president of Russia said they discussed in all detail the coming resignation of the president of the USSR. Yeltsin noted that after Gorbachev's resignation he will be paid a "life pension equal to his present pay" (over 4,000 rubles), he will be granted a state dacha and apartment (but not the ones he occupies now), two cars (a ZiL and Volga), and a bodyguard of 20 persons.

The president of Russia noted that during the meeting he received from the USSR president a number of archive documents, including some from the Stalin period, from which he said he learned of many crimes committed not only against the Soviet but also against other peoples. In time we are obliged to open these documents because they must not be concealed from the world community, the Russian president stressed.

The Russian president informed journalists that last Sunday when, as we know, the siege in Tbilisi of the Georgian government building by opposition forces began, he was telephoned by President of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who asked him to receive him urgently. The president of Russia did not wish to do this, giving as his reason the violations of rights and freedoms of man in Georgia, especially in South Ossetia. Now, Boris Yeltsin added, military actions is taking place in Tbilisi too. "I do not know how this matter will end," he remarked. "At least we came to an agreement that the Army or the internal forces would in no event take part in this conflict."

In this connection the Russian president announced that the leaders of the member-states of the commonwealth have decided to set up interethnic security detachments, "in order to avoid applying to the United Nations in the event of any conflicts between the states." These detachments will be set up on a voluntary contractual basis.

Interethnic Security, Popov Viewed

PM2612162691 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

["Own information" report: "President's Meeting With Newspaper Editors"]

[Text] Yesterday [25 December] Russian President Boris Yeltsin met with editors of Russian Federation newspapers. It was an hour-long talk during which the president spoke with his customary frankness about how the Commonwealth of Independent States was born, what problems in connection with the new formation have been resolved, and what prompted this extraordinary step. There is much that Russia's citizens already know, so let us note just a few key points, first and foremost the question of unified command of the strategic forces, which include—in addition to nuclear arms—the Navy, Air Force, and military intelligence. Command will be exercised by Marshal Shaposhnikov. On the proposal of Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, Mikhail Gorbachev will hand over the nuclear button to Boris Yeltsin. A special communications system will be set up for the presidents of Ukraine and Kazakhstan and the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, enabling them to conduct an instantaneous exchange of information and adopt a coordinated decision.

Agreement has been reached in principle on the setting up of interethnic security detachments with a view to preventing and quelling interethnic conflicts.

Boris Yeltsin gave an account of his one-hour meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev Monday. Asked why the meeting was so long, the Russian president let it be known that the president of the former Union had had confidential matters to discuss.

On Gorbachev's future, Yeltsin had this to say: He will be given a pension equivalent to his present wages with subsequent indexation, and he will be granted a state dacha (but not the one he currently occupies), two cars, and a guard of 20 (including drivers and service personnel). Apparently, after a vacation, Mikhail Gorbachev will commence work at the "Gorbachev Foundation" which has been set up.

A question was asked about Gavriil Popov's resignation. Boris Yeltsin, while stressing the urgent need for privatization, which the mayor of Moscow insists on, observed nonetheless that this cannot be done "in a few hours." The ideas of the mayor's colleague Piyasheva have met with active opposition from Moscow City Soviet.

Yeltsin said that he is going to meet with Popov once more. if the mayor insists, then apparently Yeltsin will not beg him.

"Will there be a New Year message to the Russian people?"—that was the final question. The Russian president replied that at the 30 December meeting of the Commonwealth heads of state in Minsk, they will think about the text of a short joint message. Yeltsin will speak on television 28 December, but the subject of his address is most likely to be determined by the forthcoming price liberalization and the situation in the Russian Federation.

Luzhkov on Popov Meeting

LD2512204991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1901 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Gennadiy Talalayev]

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—There are grounds to believe that the meeting between Boris Yeltsin, president of Russia, and Gavriil Popov scheduled for 26 December will end in the Moscow mayor reversing his decision to resign, Yuriy Luzhkov, head of the Moscow government, said.

Answering questions from journalists after a meeting with the Russian president, which had taken place on 24 December, Yuriy Luzhkov noted that the mayor's statement on resignation had been caused not by personal reasons but by the fact that of late conditions hampering the advance of deep economic reforms had come about in Moscow. Now these causes have been removed. The head of the Moscow government also said that issues of privatization and food supplies had been discussed at the meeting with Boris Yeltsin. Practically all our proposals found positive solutions, he said.

Belarus

Chairman: 'Gloomy Notes' in Gorbachev Speech

LD2612120691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1006 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By correspondent Andrey Palariya]

[Text] Moscow, 26 Dec (TASS)—Stanislav Shushkevich, chairman of the Republic of Belarus's Supreme Soviet, in a telephone call with a TASS correspondent today, viewed USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation as a logical consequence of what has happened in the former Union. Noting Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation as a political fact, he said that "the USSR president's political statement could have been more optimistic. There were too many gloomy notes in it."

Sweden Recognizes Republic's Independence

LD2512103891 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarussian 0400 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The Belarussian Foreign Ministry received a telegram from Swedish Foreign Minister Margaretha af Ugglas on 20 December 1991 which reads: The Swedish Government has decided to recognize the Republic of Belarus as a sovereign and independent state. In recognizing the Republic of Belarus as a sovereign state, the Swedish Government has noted the intention, expressed by your government and parliament, to fulfill the Soviet Union's international obligations. Especially satisfying is the statement that the Republic of Belarus will fulfill its obligations on the fundamental principles of relations between states and human rights and freedoms within the CSCE framework. The Swedish Government highly appraises your country's decision to become a nuclear-free state, the telegram says.

KGB Statement on Embassy 'Scheme' Disclosure

LD2212043591 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1220 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The KGB of Belarus may stop cooperation with the Interrepublican Security Service (ISS) following the ISS head handing over to the U.S. ambassador the materials disclosing the special equipment installation and usage scheme [of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow]. The statement by the Public Relations Department of the republican KGB published December 19 by the republican media also says that ISS head Vadim Bakatin flagrantly violated the bilateral agreement with the Republic of Belarus on ensuring state security. Whatever the level of interstate relations, we are convinced that information damaging the security of states is not to be handed over or divulged, the authors of the statement believe.

Zhirinovskiy Threatens To Jail CIS Founders

LD2312224591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1930 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By BELTA-TASS correspondent]

[Text] Minsk, 23 Dec (TASS)—"If I am in power in April next year, of which there is no doubt, then in May, all those who in Alma-Ata placed their signatures to the agreement on forming the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] will be in prison for having staged a coup d'etat," Vladimir Zhirinovskiy stated yesterday in a speech on Belarussian state television. [passage indistinct] "Once I am president, I will place troops in a state of heightened combat readiness," Zhirinovskiy promised. "Bandits from ethnic armed groupings who have not handed over their weapons within 72 hours will be eliminated."

Zhirinovskiy's comments on republican television formed the subject matter of a parliamentary debate. Opposition deputies demanded an immediate discussion on the matter of the appropriateness of the office being held by the chairman of state television and radio of the Republic of Belarus.

Oil was thrown onto the flames by the report that Zhirinovskiy was seeking to break into the meeting hall of the Supreme Soviet. There was a "heated" discussion between him and some parliamentarians in the foyer. As a result, one of the deputies appealed to the general procurator of the republic to institute criminal proceedings against Zhirinovskiy over offensive remarks and physical threats.

Passions abated somewhat when it was learned that the republican procuracy is conducting an expert investigation into the comments and statements of Zhirinovskiy with regard to calls to anti-constitutional actions.

Over 48 hours of his stay in Minsk, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party has succeeded in offending deputies of the Belarussian parliament and causing uproar in the Yubileynaya Hotel and the sports palace.

Following a demand from the procurator's office, the Minsk city executive committee has postponed his meeting with townspeople planned for today. Zhirinovskiy's actions, it observed, not only violates elementary ethics but also infringes on the sovereignty of the republic and insults its officials and leaders of the states making up the CIS.

Crowd Beats Zhirinovskiy

LD2512083891 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 2226 GMT 23 Dec 91

["Accidents" feature]

[Text] On December 23 Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party [LDP], was beaten in Minsk. At approximately 1830, in front of the city sports palace, Zhirinovskiy was addressing a 4-5 thousand-strong crowd, which included a considerable number of his opponents. Several persons dealt some blows to Zhirinovskiy, after which the LDP leader headed for Yubileinaya Hotel, surrounded by his supporters. The hotel entrance is being blocked off by Zhirinovskiy's opponents. The LDP leader had arrived in Minsk on December 22 and gave an hour's interview to the Belarus TV. Following its broadcast, Minsk city executive committee banned Zhirinovskiy's meeting with Minsk residents scheduled for December 23 at the city sports palace. This was announced at approximately 1700 during Zhirinovskiy's press conference at the sports palace. Zhirinovskiy refused to accept the ban but had to leave the building. The Belarus republican procurator's office is holding a meeting to decide what measures are to be taken against Zhirinovskiy for his violation of several articles of the republican administrative and criminal codes.

Moldova

President Defends Joining Commonwealth

AU2512140691 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 0937 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Chisinau [Kishinev] ROMPRES 25/12/1991—"When I signed the Alma-Ata documents I was aware some will accuse me of treason, of having proved not to be a patriot," the president of the Republic of Moldova, told, Tuesday, December 24, the Moldovan parliament. "I have grown accustomed with such Bolshevik-like, ungrounded accusations. But I should like to put you a question. If I did not sign the documents, if we had to face separatism, aggressive military forces and economic disaster, should we have been more independent than Ukraine and Belarus, that signed them? I think not. And I am telling you in full responsibility that I shall straightly follow the way towards independence, however great the pressures from one side or another," mentioned President Snegur.

"In order that the national economy function, as it is fully integrated in the economy of the former empire, it is necessary at present to maintain the existing ties, that are in a clear process of dissolution. We have to be realistic," added President Snegur, "while continuing to seek solutions to enter other communities."

President Mircea Snegur mentioned that the documents would be submitted to parliament, to enforce them. "The accord can be ratified with certain amendments, as in the case of Ukraine. They will be taken into account when documents are drafted to regulate cooperation in the new Commonwealth. As for the ratification, I think it should take place after we are in the possession of some other documents, mainly those on military matters and the bodies to coordinate the Commonwealth," opined President Snegur.

"Since the parliament has taken no attitude so far on the creation of the National Council for the Union (with Romania), it is normal for the people to worry. As the situation is growing worse every day, I kindly ask the parliament to urgently examine the bill on a referendum (on the union). If the people of Moldova is "for" [it], I shall be with it, like always," specified President Mircea Snegur.

Stresses Economic Links

LD2412140291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1032 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By correspondent Valeriy Demidetskiy]

[Text] Kishinev, 24 Dec (TASS)—Moldova's participation in the Commonwealth of Independent States is the result of the consistent policies conducted by its parliament. This was stated by President Mircea Snegur today, informing deputies of the republic's parliament about the results of the meeting in Alma-Ata.

Let us recall that Mircea Snegur's visit to Alma-Ata was evaluated by the opposition in Kishinev virtually as an act of betrayal. Leaders of the Moldovan Popular Front have been calling the republic's population to a general strike for two days. However, their attempts have been unsuccessful. Despite violations of public order provoked by the front leaders, only two or three hundred people have gathered on the capital's central square.

Speaking to deputies, Snegur recalled that according to the declaration on sovereignty, Moldova has the right to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, delegating some of its powers to it voluntarily. An idea about the creation of such a community of sovereign states had previously been elaborated and sent to Moscow by Moldovan parliamentarians.

Among the arguments in favor of joining the Commonwealth, Snegur stressed the economic arguments in particular. In his opinion, the republic was integrated to the maximum extent in the economy of the former empire and must preserve the existing links, which are falling apart right in front of one's eyes.

Snegur criticized the unconstructive actions of the opposition. He declared his immutable devotion to the idea of the republic's independence and expressed the desire to accelerate the adoption of a referendum law. In this way the opportunity will arise to discover the people's opinion on unification with Romania, on which the "national unification council" founded by the Popular Front is insisting. The president criticized the supporters of the Front who come out against the bodies of executive power in the republic and at the same time occupy leading posts in them.

Popular Front Opposes Ratifying CIS Accord

OW2512144291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1130 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] Moldova's Popular Front will oppose Moldova's joining the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS], using all democratic means available, its leader Yuriy Rozhko told the newspaper "Nezavisimaia Moldova". According to him, the Popular Front will seek to prevent the parliament from ratifying the agreement on forming the CIS.

The Popular Front leader laid the blame on the Dnestr republic which, he said, "held Moldova within the empire". According to him, Moldova's President Mircea Snegur "yielded to the armed force" of the Dnestr region.

Social Democrats Urge Government To Resign

LD2612133691 Moscow TASS in English 2209 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By correspondent Valeriy Demidetskiy]

[Text] Kishinev December 25 TASS—The Moldovan Social Democratic Party demanded a resignation of the Moldovan Government on Wednesday [25 December].

A party declaration circulated at a news conference in Kishinev described the activities of the republican government as "helpless and undermining the drive for Moldova's independence."

The party accused the government of slow moves to carry out privatisation in the republic.

The party said Moldovan President Mircea Snegur should immediately begin forming a government of national accord and confidence.

Switzerland Recognizes Independence

OW2612014891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1532 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] Switzerland has recognized the republic of Moldova. A special message to President Mircea Snegur says that the Federal Council of Switzerland recognizes the independence of the republic of Moldova and is ready to establish diplomatic relations with it.

Moldova has already been recognized by Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, Mongolia, Bulgaria and Kazakhstan.

Ukraine

Kravchuk on Control of 'Nuclear Button'

LD2512184291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1645 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—The Ukraine wishes to completely rid itself of nuclear weapons on its territory. This was confirmed by Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk in an interview published in today's IZVESTIYA. He explained this, in particular, by the "psychological shock" resulting from the accident at Chernobyl.

"Ukraine's president," writes IZVESTIYA, "rejected both the short-term and long-term probability that the Russian leader or any other person will be given the individual right to be in charge of strategic weapons situated in the Ukraine." At the same time, the newspaper notes, he put forward the "original concept of collective responsibility, which is essential in the transitional period." "That should be control [kontrol] over the nonuse of nuclear weapons," Kravchuk stated. "I stress: Over not the use but the nonuse. Why is it that almost always the 'nuclear button' is identified with the fact that it is pressed, with a launch? It is technically possible to block the 'button' so that neither Kravchuk in the Ukraine nor Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan can display willfulness."

As for tactical nuclear weapons, in the words of the Ukraine's president, "no problems at all exist" with them, because all troops in the Ukraine must entirely and fully be under the command of the president, who is the commander in chief, writes the newspaper.

In contrast with the Baltic states, the Ukraine, in the president's words, does not think the troops must leave its territory, notes IZVESTIYA. He stressed, moreover, that the ethnic composition of the remaining troops is of no significance. The government, the newspaper says citing Kravchuk, will not strive to the slightest degree either to appoint Ukrainians in place of Russians or to recall Ukrainians who are serving in other states of the community.

Republic To Demand 'Full Control' of Fleet

OW2612153291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1330 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] According to well-informed military sources, on Wednesday [25 December] the future of the Black Sea fleet was discussed at a conference in Kiev. It was attended by the acting Commander-in-Chief of the USSR Navy Admiral Ivan Kapitanets, the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet Admiral Igor Kasatonov and a delegation of the Ukraine led by its Defence Minister Konstantin Morozov.

The naval delegation suggested surrendering part of the fleet to the Ukraine "to guarantee its interests, protect its borders and maintain an operational mode along its border". If this version which is believed to have been discussed with the Russian leadership is accepted, part of the Black Sea fleet would belong to the Ukraine and the rest to the Russian Federation. However, it was categorically turned down by Ukrainian representatives, even though earlier their president Leonid Kravchuk spoke of intentions to divide warships between the Ukraine and Russia. The Ukrainian delegation stated that at the Minsk summit of the Commonwealth on December 30 the leadership of their republic intends to demand full control over the fleet and the future removal of "unnecessary" ships.

According to experts consulted by IF [INTERFAX], such a turn of developments would leave Russia without a naval force in the Black Sea.

Kiev, Russia Disagree Over Price Reform

OW2512151191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1200 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] According to unconfirmed information, Ukrainian premier, Vitold Fokin, is to hold a sitting of the Cabinet on December 25 to discuss the situation following the Minsk meeting.

As reported previously, at the sitting of the Commonwealth Council in Moscow yesterday, serious disagreements flared up between representatives of the Ukraine and Russia over the time of price liberalization.

In an interview with Ukrainian TV, Ukrainian State Minister Vladimir Lanovoy, who took part in the Moscow meeting, severely criticized the position of the Russian leaders. He said that Russia did not intend to coordinate its monetary, pricing and financial policies with other Commonwealth states. He also said that having the monopoly on printing roubles, Russia refuses to give other republics bank notes for raising wages and salaries in view of the forthcoming price liberalisation. Russia, he said, has unilaterally raised prices on oil. "Such a conduct is inadmissible and will provoke return measures," said Mr. Lanovoy.

In observers' estimate, the Ukraine on its part may raise prices on food, make Russia pay hard currency for the oil and gas running through Ukrainian territory, raise customs barriers and accelerate the introduction of a national currency.

Switzerland Recognizes Kiev's Independence

OW2512220491 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1513 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] On Tuesday [24 December] Switzerland recognized Ukraine as an independent state. It was the 12 country expressing recognition of Ukrainian independence, the chief of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's information department Vladimir Cherniy said at a briefing in Kiev. According to him, willingness to recognize Ukrainian independence was expressed by Sweden and Argentina.

Donbass Fuel Supply 'Very Alarming'

PM2312102391 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Dec 91 Union Edition p 2

[Nikolay Lisovenko report under the "Direct Line" rubric: "Donbass Cut Off From Groznyy Oil"]

[Text] Donetsk—The supply of diesel fuel from Groznyy to the Donbass has ceased.

Very few people in Donetsk Oblast knew that the region was receiving almost 70,000 tonnes of diesel fuel a month via a pipeline running from the Groznyy oilfields to Nikitovka station. Drivers of KamAZ trucks, bulldozers, and locomotives have now learned this, for the situation with diesel fuel has become catastrophic.

V. Cherkashin, chairman of Donetsk Oblast Administration of the Ukrainian State Committee for the Supply of Petroleum Products, tried to elucidate the situation in a conversation with General D. Dudayev, president of Chechnya, but was put through only to his assistant over the telephone.

Meanwhile the situation regarding the supply of petroleum products to the Donbass is very alarming. Lisichansk Oil Refinery, the country's largest, which supplies Donetsk, Lugansk, and Dnepropetrovsk, and several other oblasts with fuel, is today working at only 50 percent of its capacity because of the shortage of raw materials.

New Volunteer Military Force Raised in Lvov

PM2012120991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 18 Dec 91 Union Edition p 2

[Stepan Troyan report under the "Direct Line" rubric: "The Ukrainian People's Self-Defense Detachment Has Emerged on the Ukrainian Horizon"]

[Text] Lvov—The Ukrainian People's Self-Defense Detachment has been inaugurated on Lvov's Vechevaya Ploshchad.

The "network" of law enforcement services has been spreading rapidly throughout the independent state. The regular militia and organs of national security were joined first by the municipal militia, and then by the voluntary People's Patrol which "rose from the ashes." Now we have the Ukrainian People's Self-Defense Detachment, too.

Yuriy Shukhevich, commander in chief of the new formation and head of the Ukrainian National Assembly, announced that to some extent the Ukrainian People's Self-Defense Detachment should replace the law enforcement services in the conditions of a collapsing empire. In the event of the "occupation of the Ukraine," it should become a center around which forces opposed to the occupiers could rally.

Zinoviy Kotyk, who has just been appointed the new prosecutor for Lvov Oblast, declared the "self-defense" formation illegal.

Kravchuk Decrees Military Salary Increase

LD2012134191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1255 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By UKRINFORD correspondent Sergey Balykov]

[Text] Kiev, 20 Dec (TASS)—The salaries of military servicemen and workers at organizations of the armed forces and other military formations stationed on the territory of the Ukraine will increase next year by 1.9 times. This is stated in a decree of Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, circulated today.

The Defense Ministry and the central bodies of military formations of the republic may now independently, within the limits of their allocations, determine the salary scales of individual categories of servicemen. Salary increases, additional payments, alternative payments and benefits, and the fixing of their scales will be carried out on the basis of existing norms. The Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers has been instructed to ensure the financing of new measures for the social protection of military servicemen and the staff of military enterprises and organizations.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk declared himself commander in chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces on 12 December.

Armenia

Supreme Soviet Elects New Chairman

LD2512072191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0605 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Yerevan, 25 Dec (TASS-ARMENPRESS)—Babken Ararktsyan (47), mathematical sciences candidate, has been elected Armenian Supreme Soviet chairman.

He has been first deputy chairman of the republic's parliament since August 1990. ARMENPRESS reports that Babken Ararktsyan is one of Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan's closest comrades-in-arms and was there at the founding of the "Karabakh" committee. Among other leaders he was arrested in 1988 and was in jail for six months. He headed the Armenian delegation at the latest talks in Azerbaijan. Together with Ter-Petrosyan, he has defended the need for Armenia to participate in all the creative processes taking place on former USSR territory. He was unsuccesful at being elected several times over the last six weeks. This time, he received votes from 136 deputies out of the 209 participating in the voting.

Bulgaria, Switzerland Recognize Independence

NC2512155691 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Yerevan, 25 Dec (ARMENPRES)—Babken Ararktsyan, acting chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, informed the Armenian Supreme Soviet session yesterday that Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Mongolia, and Switzerland have recognized the independent Armenian Republic. The parliament received the announcement with applause.

Azerbaijan

Foreign Minister Protests Baker's Remarks

OW2612145391 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1330 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] Azerbaijan is alarmed by the way the U.S.A. evaluates its policy in Nagorno-Karabakh. The feeling is expressed in a letter of the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Sadykhov to the Secretary of State James Baker.

According to the PR [public relations] section of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, the letter was prompted by Baker's speech at an American university on December 12 in which he voiced a pro-Armenian opinion, as the Azerbaijani side believes.

In Sadykhov's opinion, for over three years Azerbaijan has been a target of Armenian aggression which forced it to form its own armed forces to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

The minister hoped that the foreign policy of Azerbaijan will be recognized by the U.S.A. He voiced the readiness of his republic to establish relations of equality with members of the world community in line with the UN charter.

On Wednesday [25 December] the U.S.A. recognized Azerbaijan.

Reportage Highlights Increased NKAO Violence

120 Reported Killed in Battle

LD2412205191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 24 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is, unfortunately, continuing. It became known today that 120 people—100 Armenians and 20 Azerbaijanis—have died in the battle for the Azerbaijani village of Meshali, which is an important strategic point near the town of Shusha. The number of wounded has not yet been ascertained. This is unfortunately all the information we could get from the Azerbaijani ASSRA-TRADA agency.

Weather Delays Troop Withdrawal

LD2512161991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1310 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By correspondent Vladimir Gondusov]

[Excerpt] Moscow, 25 Dec (TASS)—Several more subunits of internal troops, whose withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh is continuing, are to leave Gyandzha today. According to information from the troop operations group, currently there are more than 1,000 soldiers and officers in Gyandzha, as well as more than 100 pieces of military equipment ready for dispatch. Because of bad weather, there were no flights on 24 December, but earlier more than 300 people and 28 military vehicles had been withdrawn on 11 flights. The Azerbaijan side is not hindering the movement of columns to the airfield. Among those who are to leave Azerbaijan today are the personnel and families of soldiers of an internal troop regiment who were disarmed 22 December in Stepanakert by forces of the local Armenian self-defense. [passage omitted]

Withdrawal 'Difficult'

NC2512212491 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 25 Dec 91

["The Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh Is Getting Out of Control"—headline]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Dec (ARMENPRES-TASS)—The long-held prediction by internal troops that "withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh will take place while waging battles; it will be more difficult than Afghanistan," is threatening to become a reality.

The internal troops headquarters has told a TASS correspondent that the vehicles and armored cars ready for withdrawal are being besieged on the roads of Azerbaijan, and the military personnel are being threatened and often fired upon.

During the meeting of independent state leaders in Alma-Ata, it was said that the continued presence of the troops in that territory is not advisable. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani side is impeding in every way possible the personnel's withdrawal and is demanding that the arms and military hardware be handed over. Two Soviet Army units were disarmed last week in Agdam. There are reports that Gendzhe airport, from which the troops would be air lifted to their home base, also is surrounded.

In the meantime, the situation in Stepanakert has become exceedingly tense. On 22 December, a local Armenian self-defense armed group raided the headquarters of the internal troops regiment. Women and children marched before the armed group, but the soldiers did not open fire. The raiders seized 965 rifles and military hardware belonging to the regiment.

Colonel Valentin Zhukov, commandant of the state of emergency, attempted to go there to resolve the conflict, but an armed group took him hostage. He later was released. Armenians currently control the regiment's military headquarters and the seized weapons. On the same day, driver Private Yuriy Masenko was killed by criminals in Stepanakert. The situation remains extremely explosive.

Leonard Petrosyan, chairman of the Nagorno-Karabakh Executive Committee, said by phone that at present, when a political solution to the problem has not been achieved, the Armenian population considers the troop withdrawal a crime. Substantial numbers of Azerbaijani armed formations have gathered around Nagorno-Karabakh. He also stressed that the population of Stepanakert is indignant over the killing of the serviceman and measures are being taken to find the criminals.

Troop Withdrawal Suspended

LD2512222691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] A RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent has learned from confidential sources that the withdrawal of troops from Nagorno-Karabakh has been suspended. Their future fate will be decided at the meeting of the leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Minsk on 30 December.

Mutalibov Demands Weapons Returned

LD2512234691 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1609 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The Azerbaijani president sent a telegram to the Russian security and interior minister demanding weapons of the Stepanakert regiment of Interior Ministry troops to be returned to the republic. The weapons were seized from the Stepanakert regiment of Interior Ministry troops by the Karabakh self-defence forces on December 22. President Ayaz Mutalibov of Azerbaijan warns that in case weapons are not returned relations with Interior Ministry troops will assume an unpredictable nature. Interior Ministry troops continue to be pulled out from the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region. None of the military transport planes carrying Interior Ministry servicemen and equipment has managed to take off from Gyandzha airport since December 24 because of non-flying weather.

Georgia

Reportage Updates Crisis Events in Tbilisi

Government House Still Under Attack

LD2412115391 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0942 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] We have an urgent telephone call from Tbilisi about events taking place there. On the telephone is Zurab Dvali, a correspondent from the independent IPRINDA news agency.

[Dvali] Hello, dear radio listeners. The assault on the government house continues. At 0300 former Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua gave a news conference at the Tbilisi hotel building. He confirmed information that an armed clash between the troops of the opposition and guardsmen loyal to the president took place after four of the fighters of Tengiz Kitovani came under fire and were killed.

Sigua described as unlikely but quite possible rumors that Tengiz Epitashvili, the authorized representative of the president in Samachablo, or the so-called South Ossetia, would set off to assist the government with fighters loyal to him. Intensive firing on the government house resumed before dawn. An anti-aircraft gun and grenade launchers are being used. According to Delo Landshav, one of the members of the command staff of the armed opposition, medical assistance was requested from the government house building. The opposition allowed ambulances to pass through without hindrance.

Sigua, quoting verified information, stated that the leadership of the republic has been intensifying its search for contacts with the command of the Soviet Army. Yesterday evening, opposition supporters seized the television tower, which is now under their control. No broadcasting is taking place from the government house, either by television or radio. A special van carrying television apparatus standing in the inner courtyard of the building has been damaged.

According to latest figures, the republic's Ministry of Health informs us that there are 30 dead and 215 wounded. The situation with regard to the strength of either of the two sides remains unclear. One can say one thing with certainty: Both the troops loyal to President Gamsakhurdia, and the guardsmen in opposition, are holding out with no intention of withdrawing.

I am reporting this from Tbilisi's central communications exchange, which is occupied by the opposition, who have kindly given me the opportunity to work from here. Telephone communications have been switched off in the town center. It is impossible to telephone outside Tbilisi. The opposition people explain that this step was necessary because of strategic considerations. Shots and the roar of guns can still be heard. War is war.

[Moscow All-Union Radio First Program in Russian at 1000 GMT on 24 December carries a report that Georgia's permanent representative in Moscow has denied that Gamsakhurdia has left the republic. The report says: "Attacks by opposition forces on the government house are not ceasing. Petre Chkheidze, Georgia's permanent representative in Moscow, has rejected reports that Georgia's President Gamsakhurdia has fled the republic. The president and forces loyal to him are taking cover in the basement of the building. As it is now known, reinforcements are coming to the president's aid from several areas of the republic."]

Opposition To 'Fight Until Victory'

LD2412171191 Moscow TASS in English 1653 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi December 24 TASS—Georgian opposition forces, led by former Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua and supported by rebel national guard leader Tengiz Kitovani, will fight until victory, their representative told reporters on Tuesday [24 December] at a meeting with journalists in the "Tbilisi" Hotel, the headquarters of the opposition.

"If the opposition fails to win, then it faces death or at least emigration," well-known film producer and Georgian Republican Deputy Eldar Shengelaya said.

Former Georgian Foreign Minister Georgiy Khoshtaria is optimistic about the victory of opposition forces. The new leaders of Georgia will have to stabilise the situation in the republic, stop the conflict in South Ossetia and break out of international isolation, he said outlining the primary tasks of a possible new government.

President Calls For Western Help

LD2412180891 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1700 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Excerpt] President Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia has urged Western nations to support the lawful government in his republic. Interviewed by the news agency ASSOCIATED PRESS, President Gamsakhurdia said the West would otherwise betray democratic ideals and side with terrorists. At the same time he did not rule out a possibility for a constructive dialogue with the opposition. [passage omitted]

Leadership Appeals to UN

LD2412221291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 2133 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov—"transmitted through Russian amateur radio service"]

[Text] Tbilisi, 24 December (TASS)—The leadership of the Republic of Georgia is asking for international observers to be sent to Tbilisi. This urgent request is contained in an appeal to the United Nations, to the parliaments and countries of the whole world, issued today. The document also states that international recognition of the independence of Georgia will enable any further escalation of tension in the republic to be avoided.

Meanwhile, fighting in the center of the Georgian capital continues and is becoming more and more intense. Late this evening the TASS correspondent learned from reliable sources that the defenders of the government building have enough weapons and food, but are short of medicine for the wounded.

There are reports from western Georgia that units of volunteers are being formed in Kutaisi to be sent to help the defenders of the government building.

Zviad Gamsahurdia has issued a decree appointing the defense minister of Georgia as the operational leader of all armed forces.

Internal Affairs Minister Said Wounded

LD2512042491 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0200 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpts] The Georgian opposition intends to fight to the bitter end. [passage omitted]

The Georgian Internal Affairs Ministry duty officer refused to comment on what is happening. The duty operator in the government relations service said the internal affairs minister has been wounded. Fighting continues at Government House. [passage omitted]

CNN Interviews Gamsakhurdia

LD2512091691 Moscow TASS in English 0855 GMT 25 DEc 91

[By correspondent Mikhail Kolesnichenko]

[Text] New York December 25 (TASS)—President Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia, in a brief interview with the U.S. Cable News Network (CNN) on Tuesday [24 December], said that "a putsch against the Georgian Government, against the lawfully elected authorities is now under way in the republic."

At the same time he pointed out that he was "prepared to launch a constructive dialogue with the opposition" and urged Western countries to help his government at this difficult moment.

"Those destructive forces call themselves democrats. In actual fact, they are not democrats. They are terrorists. They want to destabilise the situation in the republic, bring about chaos and launch a civil war in Georgia. The only aim they pursue is to seize power by any means," Gamsakhurdia told CNN.

It has become known to CNN from its own reliable sources that all tactical nuclear weapons were urgently removed from Georgia's territory. A similar precautionary measure was taken with regard to Armenia and Azerbaijan.

CNN correspondents succeeded in getting into the Georgian government house which is under constant fire by opposition forces. According to CNN anchormen, the Cable News Network, it seems, remains the republican president's only source of contact with the rest of the world because the opposition has switched off main communication centres and long-distance telephone and telegraph communication channels.

Troops Clear Opposition From Square

LD2512170391 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] According to Georgiy Volskiy, deputy permanent representative of the Georgian Government in Moscow, on the evening of 24 December, following an attack by military units supporting President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the square in front of the Government House in Tbilisi was cleared of armed opposition forces. According to Volskiy, clashes are continuing on the approaches to the Government House. Fierce fighting has subsided, though. Clashes have been localized, he noted. The Georgian president is still in his residence.

Tengiz Avlotiya, Radio Rossii correspondent, has reported from Tbilisi by telephone that armed detachments of Gamsakhurdia's supporters from the provinces have arrived in town to defend authorities. According to Georgian Interior Ministry reports for 0600 on 25 December, 51 people have been killed and 176 people have been wounded in Tbilisi.

City Life 'Normal'; Public 'Blase'

LD2512181191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1614 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By special correspondent Vladimr Pashko from Tbilisi]

[Text] Good day, comrades. Today I've travelled across almost all of Tbilisi. I can tell you that life in the city is normal, if you don't count of course the long bread lines and the shop shelves almost as empty as those in Moscow. There are many people out on the streets, and lots of traffic. The events catching our attention are taking place on a square that is about 500 meters by 200 meters, outside the Government House on Rustaveli Prospekt.

From the left bank, which is its official name, where there is a huge crowd of curious onlookers, you can see a large column of smoke over the building, where President Gamsakhurdia and his supporters have taken cover. The word is that yesterday the opposition obtained a civilian helicopter from somewhere and dropped explosives on the building, which caused the fire. Alongside, another two columns of smoke are visible, slightly smaller ones. They are said to emanate from the famous School No. 1 in Tbilisi, which is a kind of national object of pride. And there is the ancient building of the National Picture Gallery, what they call The House of Artists. Tbilisi has already been deprived of two treasures.

You can't really call what is going on around Government House active combat. The sides are mainly exchanging bursts of automatic fire, sometimes interspersed with fire from hail guns and 100-mm antiaircraft guns. More intensive fighting here is expected within a few hours. President Gamsakhurdia has called for help from one of the three battalions that he redeployed to North Ossetia [as heard] after it declared independence. But it's not clear whether this battalion will be able to reach Government House.

The opposition, led by Sigua, former chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Kitovani, former commander of the National Guard, has established roadblocks on the approaches to the city. How the stand-off between these two former comrades in arms will end is unclear. Neither side is obviously strong enough to overcome the other. The public, at least here in Tbilisi, seems blase about the conflict. The militia, who are subordinate to the Interior Ministry, are strolling up and down Rustaveli Prospekt and following what looks like a let's-leave-them-to-it policy. The combatants seem to have driven themselves into a corner: as soon as one of them shows any sign of weakness, he will immediately be destroyed.

It emerged today that Omanidze, the first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers and a member of President Gamsakhurdia's inner circle, appealed to the command of the Transcaucasus Military District for the Army to intervene between the warring sides. We are categorically against getting involved in the conflict, the press was told by Lieutenant General Grekov, acting district commander. But he passed the request on to Moscow. I think that they'll turn it down there as well, but it is quite likely that the situation in Tbilisi will be discussed when the presidents meet on 30 December. It is made more likely since it emerged that President Gamsakhurdia has changed his mind and come out in favor of joining the Commonwealth of Independent States. That is probably all I have to tell you today.

Government Supporters Seize 'Initiative'

OW2512190791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1730 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] There was comparative calm in front of the government building in Tbilisi in the afternoon December 25. Groups of people were discussing the recent events just 100 metres from the place where heavy fighting between the president's supporters and opponents continued for two days. Meanwhile, in the morning the opposition was still firing at the government building which houses the president's residence and parliament.

In the morning supporters of the government held a meeting near Tbilisi university during which the public was addressed by the MPs [members of parliament] representing the political faction "Round Table - Free Georgia" and a council for coordinating the movement of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's supporters was set up.

Newspapers did not come out on Wednesday [25 December], and the editorial offices were closed.

Contradictory reports are coming about the number of victims. Accordlng to the Georgian Ministry of Public Health, by 10 p.m., December 24, 33 people had been killed and 210 wounded. The Georgian Interior Ministry reports that by 6 a.m., December 25, 51 people had been killed and 176 wounded. Georgia's permanent mission in Moscow asserts that 30 people, among them 4 women were killed, and more than 170 wounded.

Following an abortive attack by the armed supporters of the president, the opposition leaders who had headquartered in Hotel Tbilisi, moved to another building, also in Rustaveli Avenue. The attack was made on Tuesday [24 December] evening and involved three T-34 tanks and units which had arrived from the province, including South Ossetia. The tanks made several shots but were hit by the opposition fighters.

The roof of the government building was badly damaged in a helicopter bomb attack on December 23. During the attacks a box with explosives was dropped from a helicopter seized in the Tbilisi airport by Tengiz Kitovani's rebellious guards.

On the outskirts of Tbilisi, from a car without plate numbers, unknown people threw a grenade at a group of passers-by. Three people were gravely wounded.

The long-distance telephone and telegraph comnunication, switched off on Tuesday [24 December], is still paralysed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Georgiy Volskiy, Georgia's envoy to Moscow, asserts that as a result of an attack by the armed units supporting the president in the evening December 24, the square in front of the government building was cleared of the opposition fighters. Mr. Volskiy believes that on Tuesday [24 December] the initiative was seized by the supporters of the government, which was due to the arrival from the province of armed units supporting Gamsakhurdia.

Chechen Volunteers Said To Arrive

LD2512231391 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] Provocative attacks on the installations of the Transcaucasian Military District are being increased. Its command spokesmen appraised these actions as an attempt to involve the Army, which is taking a neutral position in the Tbilisi events. The Georgian capital continues to be without communications with the outer world as the international telephone and telegraph services have been halted. In order to avoid a large-scale civil war, Tengiz Sigua, the opposition leader, has called on the population of the provinces not to come to the capital. [passage omitted]

Here is a further quote, this time from AFP, which was given an interview by a spokesman of Chechen President Dudayev. He said—and indeed not only said, but categorically stated in my view—that the civil war in Tbilisi is a coup d'etat that Moscow is carrying out against Gamsakhurdia and in which Soviet military specialists are taking part. Perhaps it is this notion that is guiding the armed volunteers from the Chechen Republic, who according to the editorial office's information already have begun arriving in the Republic of Georgia. They are entering the fighting on Gamsakhurdia's side. Indeed it is reported that this did occur today in the vicinity of the airport, and an exchange of fire started with guardsmen.

I do not know whether this can bring about a breakthrough in the situation existing in Tbilisi. Apparently the president himself is not confident of this, as there are fairly active rumors that he has asked the leaders of the armed forces for military assistance. Meanwhile everything testifies to the fact that the opposition is preparing for a decisive storming of Government House in Tbilisi. The clearing of Rustaveli Street is under way, but about 2,000-3,000 supporters of Gamsakhurdia have assembled at Tbilisi state university. Incidentally, they have held a rally there.

Rebel Guards Reportedly Withdraw

LD2612074791 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0700 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] The rebel units of the Georgian National Guard and armed opposition have stopped firing and have withdrawn from Government House, Georgian Foreign Minister Murman Omanidze reported by phone to TASS on 25 December. He added that this was made possible thanks to the help of volunteers supporting the republic's president arriving from other regions of Georgia. Meanwhile, the minister would not give a preliminary analysis of the situation taking shape in Tbilisi and stressed that the situation remains extremely confused and uncertain. RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY reports that the Georgian foreign minister announced the administration's willingness to start a dialogue with the opposition.

President Wants To Join Commonwealth

LD2612111991 Moscow TASS in English
1030 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By correspondents Andrey Palaria and Igor Gvritishvili]

[Excerpt] Moscow December 26 TASS—Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia changed his stand on the new commonwealth after four days of fighting against the opposition forces. The president wants to join the 11 former Soviet republics, Georgian representative in Moscow Petre Chkheidze told TASS on Thursday [26 December] after a telephone conversation with Gamsakhurdia. Chkheidze also said it was quiet during the last night in Tbilisi.

Before the armed conflict with the opposition the Georgian president welcomed the creation of the new commonwealth, but said Georgia was not ready to join it.

Georgian Foreign Minister Murman Omanidze in a telephone conversation with TASS from Tbilisi confirmed there was no fighting during the night in the Georgian capital.

Interior troops do not interfere in the conflict between the warring sides in Georgia, TASS was told on Thursday [26 December] in the Moscow interior troops headquarters. The security of military facilities in Georgia has been strengthened, no causalties have been reported among the soldiers, the sources said.

Tbilisi police and the Georgian interior troops "do not actively interfere in the conflict," they said. [passage omitted]

Situation 'Gradually Stabilizing'

LD2612122791 Moscow Radio Rossii Network
in Russian 1100 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] According to Georgiy Volskiy, official spokesman of the Georgian Government in Moscow, the situation in Tbilisi is gradually stabilizing. He told INTERFAX that armed formations of the opposition have withdrawn from Government House in the Georgian capital. He said this, quoting from a conversation he had on special communication lines with Tbilisi. On 25 December, according to Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs information, three people were killed and 36 wounded in clashes between the supporters of President Gamsakhurdia and opposition detachments. Volskiy affirmed that on 25 December the United States recognized Georgia's independence.

According to the duty officer at the headquarters of the Transcaucasus Military District, last night the exchange of fire outside Government House in Tbilisi continued. Reinforcements are arriving in Tbilisi from other towns and regions to help the president. Yesterday a plane landed at the airport from Groznyy carrying Chechen guards, but armed detachments of the opposition would not let the Chechens get off the plane.

According to some reports, which are difficult to check because of the lack of stable communications with Tbilisi, talks have been held between representatives of Gamsakhurdia and the opposition. The results are not yet known.

South Ossetian Military Mobilizes Refugees

LD2612111891 Moscow TASS International Service
in Russian 1055 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz, 26 Dec (TASS)—The text of a decision by the commander of the Armed Forces of South Ossetia, Colonel Oleg Teziyev, on the general mobilization of citizens from 18 to 60 years of age was issued today among the refugees of South Ossetia located on the territory of the North Ossetian Soviet Socialist Republic. They have been instructed to go to the town of Tskhinvali immediately in order to defend their land. Otherwise their activities will be seen as desertion.

Intense firing between the opposing sides continued last night on the distant approaches to Tskhinvali and in Znauri Rayon, the South Ossetian Information Committee's press center reports. Residential areas and municipal buildings have also been targeted. There have been no reports of any casualties. The Ossetian side returned fire against the outskirts of the surrounding Georgian villages where the combatants are deployed.

According to Rezo Khugayev, deputy chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the South Ossetian Republic, the relative calm on the approaches to Tskhinvali is linked with the fact that some of the fighters—supporters of the Georgian president—have been switched to Tbilisi. But there are about 10,000 men, equipped with military equipment and weapons, in neighboring villages. For that reason, the Ossetian guard and self-defense detachments are constantly in a state of combat readiness.

North Ossetian newspapers today published an appeal of the Extraordinary Congress of the Ossetian People to the public and governments of all states. It says, among other things, that a year ago Torez Kulumbekov, chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of South Ossetia, was kidnapped from South Ossetian territory. The kidnapping was carried out by forces of the Georgian Interior Ministry. Kulumbekov is now held in captivity on a fabricated charge. Attempts are being made to have him convicted illegally. Despite the fact that Amnesty International recognizes Torez Kulumbekov as the number one prisoner of conscience, the Georgian leadership is ignoring public demands for his release.

Defense Set Up; City 'Awaits' Attack

LD2412142191 Moscow TASS in English 1326 GMT 24 Dec 91

[By correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz December 24 (TASS)—The socio-political situation in South Ossetia is assuming a threatening character. According to the press centre of the South Ossetian Information Committee, last night was anxious in the region's crisis-ridden zones—on the far approaches to Tskhinval (this is now the name of the city of Tskhinvali) and in Znauri District. The warring sides continued to exchange fire there.

Georgian militants from nearby villages conducted aimed fire on residential areas and important economic facilities.

According to unconfirmed data, there are wounded among civilians. The Ossetian guard and self-defence units returned the fire to neutralise militants' weapon emplacements.

"Over the past 24 hours, individual groups of militants began to withdraw from the outskirts of Tskhinval in the direction of Tbilisi," Colonel Oleg Teziyev, commander of the South Ossetian armed forces, told TASS.

"However, a large number of militants are still present in nearby villages. They may launch an attack at any moment. The city awaits an assault. Therefore a call-up of citizens aged from 18 to 60 has been announced in the republic. A self-defence committee and other defence structures have been set up," Teziyev said.

At this extremely tense moment, the leadership of the South Ossetian republic does not depart from its principled position: It expresses the people's aspiration for South Ossetia's reunification with Russia.

A statement issued by the Presidium of the South Ossetia Supreme Council today has it that the population of the region will in every way avoid an aggravation of the situation in the crisis-ridden zones and will take all measures to prevent a further escalation of the armed conflict between the Georgian and Ossetian sides.

Kazakhstan

Nazarbayev on Gorbachev, Nuclear Control

OW2412140491 Tokyo NHK General Television Network in Japanese 1205 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Interview with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev by anchorman Tadashi Sonoda via satellite relay, "sometime this evening," with Nazarabyev at his presidential office in Alma-Ata and Sonoda at the NHK studio in Tokyo; from "NHK News 21" program;—recorded; Sonoda in Japanese, Nazarbayev in Russian with simultaneous Japanese voiceover; translated from the Japanese]

[Text] [Sonoda] [video shows Nazarbayev and Sonoda on a split-image screen] Specifically, when will President Gorbachev resign and in what form? What position will he assume after stepping down? Mr. Nazarbayev, have you heard any answers to these questions?

[Nazarbayev] Well, as a matter of fact I happened to have talked with Mr. Gorbachev today about those very questions. I think he will probably make an announcement regarding his resignation tomorrow evening. I think the announcement will be made through the news media. Mr. Gorbachev's decision is to set up a so-called Gorbachev foundation with Shevardnadze, Velikhov, Shatalin, and other academicians. It is planned to be an international socio-political research institute.

[Sonoda] Kazakhstan had originally supported President Gorbachev's new Union treaty concept but subsequently changed to participate in the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]. It can be said that this factor determined President Gorbachev's final fate. What was the biggest reason for you to have made that choice?

[Nazarbayev] As I have always said, I am a person who proceeds from practical and realistic things. This gigantic country occupies one-sixth of the world's surface and holds the common destiny of various nationalities. I have maintained my position from the viewpoint that it would be horrible if these nations should break apart and sever relations with one another. Not everything, however, can be determined by Kazakhstan's position. Regarding Mr. Gorbachev, he has been behind developments taking place at home. For example, I have been approving of the Nine-plus-One agreement at Novo-Ogarevo. It was designd to create a real federation making it possible for all republics and states to maintain complete freedom, sovereignty, and independence. I thought it would be possible to found a nation from bottom to top. Mr. Gorbachev, however, wanted to make a country from top to bottom and leave intact the system and structure which we called administrative or directive.

[Sonoda] President Nazarbayev, what is Kazakhtan's basic posture toward nuclear arms control? Does the Kazakhstan Republic have the intention of using nuclear arms to apply the brakes on Russian leadership?

[Nazarbayev] That is absolutely impossible. There is no reason for that, nor is there any reason for entertaining that sort of apprehension. Our principled position has already been expressly written in documents. The documents expressly state nonproliferation of nuclear arms, stating that nuclear arms and nuclear technology will not be transferred to other countries. The control of nuclear arms will be placed under the Russian president and the unified strategic nuclear arms control command of the CIS. This is very clear. It is prescribed that all decisions will be made through coordination among the four states. Therefore, it is very clear.

[Sonoda] Turning to economic issues, which is an urgent task, early next year Russia intends to implement an independent economic policy including the liberalization of prices. The interests of the republics in the Commonwealth are all entangled. Now, will it be possible in the near future for the Commonwealth to adopt an economic policy which is coordinated across the entire Commonwealth?

[Nazarbayev] An important point at the present moment is that we are about to reach an agreement in which we must carry out at the same time both the introduction of the market system and price liberalization. Leaders of the commonwealth are meeting today on that point.

[Sonoda] Thank you very much for being with us today despite your busy schedule.

Nazarbayev, Baker Hold Phone Talks

LD2512181691 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 0100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] There have been a lot of telephone calls recently between the president of Kazakhstan and the U.S. secretary of state. According to the president's press office, James Baker called Nursultan Nazarbayev saying that he informed President George Bush about his talks with leaders of the republics. The secretary of state expressed his hope that the United States will recognize the independence of former Union republics and that Kazakhstan will be one of the first to be recognized. Another telephone call came from Baker, who expressed satisfaction with the results of the Alma-Ata meeting and again confirmed that his country will possibly soon recognize the independence of Kazakhstan.

Military Budget Plans Outlined

LD2512202491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1215 GMT 25 Dec 91

[By KAZTAG correspondent Vladimir Akimov]

[Text] Alma-Ata, 25 Dec (TASS)—Kazakhstan is to institute a separate budgetary item for defense expenditure. In 1992 the republic is to allocate more than 22 billion rubles [R] for defense. News of this came today from the independent youth newspaper EKSPRES. The intention is to channel funds into a general pool, from which will come funding for the joint armed forces of all the Commonwealth states, as well as for the border troops. The defense budget was set to take account of the imminent price liberalization. It is expected that on average there will be a four-fold increase in prices. The National Guard that is now being formed in the republic will receive R150 million. Informed sources have indicated that it will be subordinate to the president of Kazakhstan alone, and will not join the Commonwealth collective security system. Spending on defense is less than 20 percent of the overall budget.

Azerbaijan President Recognizes Independence

LD2512205991 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 0100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Mutalibov, president of the Republic of Azerbaijan, sent a telegram to Nursultan Nazarbayev, which says: Following the peaceful foreign policy based on equality, friendship between all the nations and also being guided by the principle of the nation's self-determination, the Azerbaijan Republic declares its recognition of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a sovereign state. On behalf of Azerbaijani people and myself, I wish you and the people of Kazakhstan peace, prosperity, and success in strengthening state sovereignty and in the building of a democratic society. I express confidence that fruitful, friendly relations will develop successfully between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is of vital interest to the peoples of our republics and in strengthening peace.

Tajikistan

Supreme Soviet Recognizes Commonwealth States

LD2512190191 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1630 GMT 25 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] The session of the Republic of Tajikistan Supreme Soviet continued its work in Dushanbe today.

[Correspondent M. Madzhidov] Today, at the morning sitting, Rakhmon Nabiyev, president of Tajikistan, delivered a report on the meeting of the heads of the independent states in Alma-Ata. He described in detail the progress of the talks between the heads of the independent states which resulted in signing documents that are very important for the republics of the former Union. After somewhat scrappy but stormy discussion and a vote by name, the Tajikistan Supreme Soviet ratified the agreement on setting up the Commonwealth of Independent States by an absolute majority.

There was also a lively discussion about the Republic of Tajikistan's recognition of the independence of the sovereign states belonging to the former USSR. Parliamentarians decided to adopt a decision on the recognition of the independence of the following sovereign states: the Azerbaijani Republic; the Republics of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova; the Russian Federation; Turkmenistan; the Republic of Uzbekistan; and Ukraine. The committee for culture, international affairs, and interethnic relations has been instructed to draw up findings on the possibility of recognizing the independence of the sovereign Baltic states.

About 20 issues still remain on the agenda. In view of the importance of the state tasks being resolved, the session of the Republic of Tajikistan Supreme Soviet decided to adjourn and continue its work in two weeks. [Video shows a session of the Supreme Soviet in progress and R. Nabiyev speaking from the rostrum]

Afghanistan Recognizes Republic's Independence

OW2612015791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1532 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In the wake of Afghanistan's recognition of Tajikistan both countries must step up their efforts to develop bilateral relations, says Afghanistan's Consul in Tajikistan Muhammed Wali. He is certain that cooperation by two independent republics having historical, cultural and other traditions will develop to mutual benefit from now on.

Shots Fired at Guards on Afghan Border

OW2512153891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1200 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Mounted frontier guards were fired at on the border beteen Tajikistan and Afghanistan. According to Cl. V. Kochenov, chief of staff of the operative group of the Central Asian border district, the shots were made by three mujaheddin on the Afghan side of the border. A horse was killed. The frontier guards did not retaliate.

From now on, said V. Kochenov, frontier guards will use armoured vehicles, not horses, in the area. The commander of the Afghan opposition grouping controlling the region adjoining Tajikistan has been armed [as received] that if such incidents take place again, the border guards will retaliate with armed fire.

Turkmenia

Supreme Soviet Ratifies Commonwealth Agreement

LD2612120791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1136 GMT 26 Dec 91

[By TURKMENINFORM correspondent]

[Text] Ashkhabad, 26 Dec (TASS)—The Supreme Soviet of Turkmenistan today ratified the agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] and its protocol, which was signed on 21 December in Alma-Ata by President Saparmurad Niyazov.

Speaking at the session, the republic president stressed that the CIS, which was created on the principle of equality of rights, meets the interests of independent Turkmenistan and will help the republics of the former union extricate themselves from the protracted economic crisis and establish a smooth working rhythm of the national economy on the basis of close cooperation.

The parliament also adopted a decision taking away the powers of USSR people's deputies from Turkmenistan and people's deputies of Turkmenistan in the USSR Supreme Soviet in connection with the ratification of the agreement on the establishment of the CIS.

Turkey Officially Recognizes Independence

OW2612031191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1730 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Turkey's official recognition of Turkmenistan's independence was set forth in the Turkish government's message which was presented to the Turkmenistan leaders by Turkish Minister of Culture Mr. Fikri Saglar, who is currently visiting Ashkhabad.

According to the press service of the Turkmenistan president, the Turkish guests are exploring the possibilities of Turkey's participation in restoring architectural and historical monuments of that republic. With this end in view Mr. Saglar will make a familiarizing trip round Turkmenistan.